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Practical Christianity:

Or, an Account of the

HOLINESS

WHICH THE

Gospel Enjoins,

WITH

The MOTIVES to it, and the REMEDIES it proposes against TEMPTATIONS.

WITH A

PRAYER

Concluding each distinct Head.

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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

TO THE READER.

Reader,

I *Have endeavoured in this following diſcourſe, to endear* Holineſs *to the Love and Practice of Mankind; which is a deſign neither ſo* trifling *nor* criminal *as to ſtand in need of an excuſe.*

But becauſe a very worthy deſign may miſcarry in the Contrivance and method of its proſecu-

tion, therefore I think my ſelf oblig'd to give you ſome account of that: which is thus: I have endeavoured to repreſent Religion *in its* true *and* natural *Character, purified from the* ſenſual Freedoms *which ſome, and the* frantick *and* conceited Whimſies *which others deform it by: I have propos'd the* glorious Motives *to Holineſs, and the powerful* Remedies *againſt Temptation which it contains. I have performed this as near as I could, in an eaſie Method and familiar Style: I have not intermixt either* Fancy *or* Paſſion, *which ſeems to me too light and gariſh a dreſs for Divine thoughts, but writ them in as natural a plainneſs and Majeſty as I could give them, hoping all*

all from the Conquering power and influence of clear Truth, and therefore it will be neceſſary, to him who ſhall deſign any advantage to himſelf from this Treatiſe, to read it deliberately, and allow each Sentence a proper Conſideration; for being forced to crowd many Truths into a narrow compaſs, I have wove the matter a little cloſer, and choſe a conciſer Style, than otherwiſe I ſhould have done; and therefore do not expect to be betray'd by me into a wiſe Love *of* Religion *at unawares,* or *to be heated into a* Romantick Paſſion *for Vertue, the former is impoſſible, and the latter of little uſe; but if you bring an* honeſt *and* attentive *mind, I hope you may find ſomething in this Diſcourſe which may*

be of very important ſervice to your Soul. And beſides this, I had one inudcement more to the Publication of this Treatiſe; that is, I am ſufficiently aſſured that no kind of Diſcourſes contribute more to the peace and welfare of Church and State than thoſe practical ones, which aim at implanting real goodneſs in the minds of Men; for the want of this goodneſs is it which hath betrayed us into Errours ſo numerous *and ſo* fatal *to the publick Peace, and Charity, and to the very vitals of Religion? for if our minds were poſſeſs'd with that* Charity, *and* Meekneſs, *and true* Zeal *for the Divine Glory, which becomes* Chriſtians, *we ſhould conſider more* calmly, *and ſee more* clearly, *and act more* ſincerely;

ſincerely; *we ſhall diſcern a more manifeſt contradiction to Religion in thoſe unnatural Feuds, which are carried on by ſo much paſſion in ſuch irreligious methods, and made uſe of to ſuch unchriſtian purpoſes, than in any thing, which is the ſubject of our conteſts; and we ſhould follow after peace by a compliance, if not to* all, *yet to all we* could, *and then I am confident we ſhould ſoon put an end, if not to our* Miſtakes, *yet to our* Diviſions.

If I have contributed my endeavours to this, in my degree and capacity; I hope for Pardon *at leaſt here, and am aſſured of a* Reward *hereafter.* Farewel.

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Practical

Practical Chriſtianity.

CHAP. I.

Shewing the neceſſity of being Religious, *becauſe the Salvation of our Souls depends on it. The nature of the Soul, and the Influence of Sin upon it in this World conſidered. The miſery of a ſinful Soul in ſtate of Separation, the conſummation of its miſery after the Reſurrection.*

1. WHat *is a man profited* (ſaith our Bleſſed Saviour, *Matt.* 16. 26.) *if he ſhall gain the whole world and loſe his own Soul?*

We have Soules as well as Bodies.

That I have in this ſtate I am now in, a *Soul* as well as a *Body*, whoſe intereſt concerns me, is a truth my own ſenſe ſufficiently diſcovers; for I feel *Joys* and *Sorrows*, which do not make their abode in the Organs of the *Body*, but in the inmoſt receſſes of the Mind; *pains*

and pleaſures which Sence is too groſs and heavy to partake of, as the *peace* or *trouble* of Conſcience in the reflexion upon good or evil Actions, the *delight* or *vexation* of the Mind, in the contemplation of, or a fruitleſs inquiry after excellent and important Truths.

The pleaſure of the Soul of more importance to us than that of the Body.

2. And ſince I have ſuch a Soul capable of Happineſs or Miſery, it naturally follows, that it were ſottiſh and unreaſonable to *loſe* this Soul for the *gain* of the whole World: For my Soul is *I my ſelf*, and if *that* be miſerable *I* muſt needs be ſo; outward circumſtances of Fortune may give the World occaſion to *think* me happy, but they can never make me ſo. Shall I call my ſelf happy; if diſcontent and ſorrow eat out the life and ſpirit of my Soul? if luſts and paſſions riot and mutiny in my boſome? if my ſins ſcatter an uneaſie ſhame all o'er me, and my guilt appales and frights me? What avails it me, that my rooms are ſtately, my tables full, my attendants numerous, and my attire gawdy, if all this while my very *Being* pines and languiſhes away? *Theſe* indeed are rich and pleaſant things, but I nevertheleſs

theleſs am a poor and miſerable Man: Therefore I conclude, that whatever this thing be I call a Soul, though it were a periſhing, dying thing, and would not out-live the Body, yet it were my wiſdom and intereſt to prefer its content and ſatisfaction before all the World, unleſs I could chuſe to be *miſerable* and *delight* to be *unhappy*.

3. This very Conſideration, ſuppoſing the uncertainty of another World, would yet ſtrongly engage me to the ſervice of Religion, for all it aims at is to baniſh ſin out of the World, which is the Source and Original of all the troubles that diſquiet the mind; for, 1. Sin in its very Eſſence is nothing elſe but diſordered, diſtempered paſſions, affections fooliſh and prepoſterous in their choice, or wild and extravagant in their proportion, which our own experience ſufficiently convinces us, to be painful and uneaſie. 2. It engages us in deſperate hazards, wearies us with daily toils, and often buries us in the ruines we bring upon our ſelves: and *laſtly*, it fills our hearts with diſtruſt, and fear, and ſhame; for we ſhall never be able to perſwade

Although there were no other life.

our ſelves *fully*, that there is no difference between Good and Evil, that there is no God, or none that concerns himſelf at the Actions of this life; and if we cannot, we can never rid our ſelves of the pangs and ſtings of a troubled conſcience: we ſhall never be able to eſtabliſh a peace and calm in our boſoms, and ſo enjoy our Pleaſure with a clear and uninterrupted freedom. But if we could perſwade our ſelves into the utmoſt height of Atheiſm, yet ſtill we ſhall be under theſe two ſtrange inconveniences. 1. That a life of Sin will be ſtill irregular and diſorderly, and therefore troubleſome. 2. That we ſhall have diſmantled our Souls of their greateſt ſtrengths, diſarm'd them of that Faith, which only can ſupport them under the afflictions of this preſent Life.

Not to mention that, after all, the ſad ſtories of another Life will not be ſtraitway nonſence, becauſe we *think* them ſo, they will continue at leaſt-wiſe diſputable, and who would, but a deſperate Sot, commit his Soul to ſuch a venture!

Much more the ſoul being immortal.

Sect. 2. 4. But *when* I conſider, that the *immortality* of the Soul is a perſwaſion, which

which generally obtain'd in the Heathen World, that the more wiſe and vertuous any of them were, the more deeply were they poſſeſs'd by the belief and hopes of it, that the reaſons *Plato*, *Cicero* and others founded this aſſertion in, deriv'd from the nature of the Soul, its operations, its little affinity to any viſible matter, and its reſemblance of the Deity, have rendered it ſo highly probable, that it hath ſhed a very powerful influence upon the Lives of many.

5. But eſpecially and above all, when I conſider, that the Holy Scripture, (whoſe Divine Authority is clear'd by as ſtrong evidences as any matter of that nature is capable of) aſſures me, that this Soul (whether in its *own nature* immortal or no, I'll not now examine) ſhall not periſh in the Diſſolution of this Earthly Tabernacle; as *Eccleſ.* 12. 7. *Then ſhall the duſt return to the Earth as it was, and the Spirit ſhall return to God who gave it*: and *Matt.* 10. 28. *Fear not them which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul*: The Soul it ſeems is not liable to the injuries of a Diſeaſe, or the violence committed on

the Body, but doth ſubſiſt when the Body is diſſolv'd into its duſt:) When I conſider all this, I can never ſo far renounce my reaſon, and harden my ſelf againſt all the tenderneſs and paſſion I have for my ſelf, as to be content that this Soul ſhould be loſt in that other ſtate, provided I be fortunate and ſucceſsful in this; for what ſatisfaction can I then reap from a patrimony or purchaſe wide as the World it ſelf, in a ſtate, wherein I ſhall be depriv'd of all means and opportunity of enjoyment? What can the Wealth, or Power, or Beauty of the World ſignifie to me, when the Body, which is the proper inſtrument of earthly pleaſure, ſhall lie ſtark dead and cold in the Grave, ſhall have no paſſions, no appetites, nor can all the Rhetorick or wanton charms on Earth, awaken in it one languiſhing deſire, or one imperfect act of Life; and as to the Soul, it muſt dwell in the Manſions of a new World, (far, far remote from this,) wherein every thing will be *ſtrange*, *wonderful*, *unalterable* and *eternal*.

The wretchedneſs of a vitious Soul in a ſeparate ſtate.

But I muſt purſue this thought a little further, and not ſtopping in the contem-

contemplation of the *uſeleſsneſs* of the World after the Soul's departure from it, go on to conſider the Soul in its intermediate ſtate between Death and the Reſurrection, that I may know the utmoſt (if I can) that the loſs of a Soul imports; and here I would ſuppoſe my ſelf ſurprized in the midſt of gaiety and pleaſures, of Love and Honour, by a violent, inexorable Diſeaſe; I reſign up my dear objects, and my dotage together; I am torn from my poſſeſſions and my hopes; and when the ſtorm hath burſt the Cable, and ſhatter'd the Hulk of this frail Bark the Body, it caſts my "Soul, that is all that remains of me, "upon an unknown ſtrand, naked, and "poor, and deſolate, without intereſts, "or friends, or hopes; it muſt dwell in "the diſmal blackneſs of Eternal night, "and melancholy, rackt by deſpair and "guilt, ſcourg'd by ſhame and rage, tor"tur'd with envy and vexation, ſtabb'd "by regret and repentance, not a calm "and ſoft, but a tempeſtuous and pain"ful one; then like ſome ſick body, which rowls and tumbles for an eaſie poſture, rather out of an inability to ſuffer pain,

" than any hope of finding reſt, it ſome-
" times languiſhes and looks back upon
" the world vaniſht like a dream, and
" repeats ineffective wiſhes for the Bo-
" dy, but it ſhall return to its dear
" Wealth and Beauty no more for ever:
" Sometimes like *Dives* in the flames,
" it looks towards that Region, where
" Light and holy Souls do dwell, but the
" unpaſſable gulf of the Almighty's De-
" cree cuts off all hopes of that, ſo that
" that Light only augments its envy and
" deſpair, and *Heaven* it ſelf adds
" *miſery* to the wretched Soul's Hell.

This is the natural and unavoidable ſtate of a wretched Soul, diſlodg'd from the Body; deſpair, and rage, and ſhame, and guilt, and fear, and grief, and anguiſh, gnaw and devour the miſerable Creature, and for ever muſt encreaſe. Bleſſed God! need there any chains to ſink it lower than its own weight hath done? Needs there any other darkneſs cover that Soul, which ſuch a cloud of ſorrows hath benighted? Tell me no more of pleaſures, theſe thoughts are enough to make me tremble, and grow pale at the approach of a temptation; rather

rather than my Soul ſhould dwell in ſuch a ſtate a thouſand years, may ſhame and poverty be my portion in this life; may the hatred of powerful enemies, or what is worſe, the ſcorn of my deareſt friends, purſue me; may my Body be but a Scene of Diſeaſes, and ſo incapable of the leaſt guſt of pleaſure; and more than this, may an awakened tender Conſcience every moment flaſh Death and Hell into my face, or if there be any thing worſe let me ſuffer it, ſo it but preſerve my Soul from ſin here, and from that inexpreſſible ſtate of torments afterward!

And yet all this while I have taken no notice of thoſe additional ſufferings which *Divine Vengeance* will no doubt inflict upon the Soul, nor of the nature of the Soul; the exaltedneſs of whoſe Eſſence heightens and ſharpens the pain; for the more *delicate* the Being, the more *ſubtile* its perception, and the more *exquiſite* the torment.

Sect. 3. There is a Third ſtate wherein miſery ſwells to the higheſt mark it can poſſibly, when the Body, being rais'd again ſhall follow the Fate of the Soul, and both ſhall be condemn'd to inextinguiſhable

The wicked man's ſtate after the Reſurrection.

guiſhable flames. O Hell, where only the Enemies of God and Goodneſs dwell! where wretched Men undergo all that *ſullying* the Divine Glory, and *trampling* on the *Blood* of Chriſt can merit! But I have reſerv'd a place for a farther ſurvey of this ſtate.

The Inference and Concluſion. I am ſufficiently convinc'd, that the gaining of the whole World cannot recompence the loſs of my Soul, ſince its loſs implies all this, and more: for what would I take to be miſerable? or rather, what would I take to be eternally ſo? is it a rational queſtion, if I loſe *my ſelf* what can be gain to *me*? the World peradventure will continue amiable many ages after I am gone, but what is that to me?

And if to gain the whole World at ſo dear a price be ſo ill a Bargain, how fatal a purchaſe ſhould I make, who am like to gain ſo little, being none of the World's greateſt Favourites! My Soul is not ſo cheap yet, that I can ſet it at ſo low a rate, as a few hundreds a year: I am as immortal as any Monarch in Chriſtendom; and my pretenſions to the Almighty's favour may grow equal to that of any

any of the Sons of Men, and I ſhould be a Profligate and Reprobate, a Brute indeed, if I ſhould abandon my poor Soul to Miſery, and renounce the Intereſt I have in the God of Heaven and Earth, for I know *not what.*

Let who will therefore ſweat and toil for wealth and greatneſs, I have but this one buſineſs to do, to inſure this dear, dear Soul of mine in its voyage to eternity; let who will gain the Reputation of a wiſe man by a clearer foreſight and thriftier management of affairs, by an unwearied attendance, and inſinuating applications, I ſhall think my ſelf *wiſe* enough, if I can but be ſav'd, and *great* enough if I enjoy but the ſmiles of Heaven: Let who will applaud themſelves for the contempt of intrigue and ſullen buſineſs, whilſt they thaw and diſſolve in ſoft and delicate pleaſures, or waſte and ſpend themſelves in courſe and toilſome Luſts; "If I may enjoy the plea-"ſure of a manly rational life, ſpent in "a conſtant courſe of Religion and Ver-"tue, without ſuperſtition or froward-"neſs; of a mind unharaſs'd by defires "and fears; of a peaceful aſſur'd Con-"ſcience;

" ſcience; of the Contemplations of glo-
" rious Truths, and the hopes of a bleſ-
ſed Immortality, I ſhall envy none the happineſs of the moſt luſcious pleaſure, or kindeſt fortune the World affords.

A Prayer reflecting on the Precedent Diſcourſe.

BLeſſed God, give me grace to prefer the intereſt of my ſoul to the World and Fleſh; the things eternal to the things temporal; that amidſt the pleaſures of Proſperity and Peace, and the flatteries of Reputation, I may not forget to think what will be the condition of my future ſtate; and that amidſt the troubles which beſiege this mortal Life, I may be ſupported by the bleſſed hopes of a better World; that the confident belief of the Soul's immortality may render me induſtrious to lay up a good foundation for the time to come; ſo that when I ſhall have put off this tabernacle of clay, I may be cloath'd with a building of God, not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens: all this I beg, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Of the Nature of Chriſtianity. Chriſtianity conſiſts of Faith and Practice. Three things eſpecially to be regarded in our Faith. 1. Its tendency to promote holineſs. 2. That no ſcruples about matters of Faith deſtroy the peace of our boſoms. 3. That difference of opinions do not deſtroy Charity.

CHriſtianity may be conſider'd either in relation to *Faith*, or *Practice*: I will firſt conſider the Chriſtian *Faith*, and that in the moſt practical manner I can.

Three things to be regarded in our Creed.

In my Creed, I have regard to three things eſpecially. 1. To the uſe and end of Faith, which is certainly to guide and influence our lives. 2. To the peace of my own Breaſt. And 3. To the preſervation of Charity: My reaſon for the firſt is evident of itſelf; becauſe without holineſs no man ſhall ſee God, if therefore my Faith do not produce this, it can avail me nothing. My reaſon for the ſecond

The influence of our Faith.

The Peace of our Conſcience.

cond is this: Tho I may doubt whether I believe aright all that is neceſſary to my eternal ſalvation, and yet that doubt not prove injurious to my happineſs at the laſt day, becauſe I did both believe aright and live conformably to it; and the ſcruple aroſe only from the diſputes and conteſts of men, and the weakneſs of my own underſtanding, not from any iniquity of my will; yet this doubt will diſquiet and diſturb my repoſe, damp my chearfulneſs and vigour, and may peradventure unſettle my Faith, and end, if not in Atheiſm, in coldneſs, and indifferency. It is evident then that it nearly concerns me to guard my Soul againſt all ſcruples that may endanger its peace.

The preſervation of Charity.

My reaſon for the 3d is this: Though I may believe *Another* in a damnable errour, when he is not, without prejudice to my own Soul, becauſe I may make this judgment in the ſimplicity of my heart, by the beſt light and rule I have; yet peradventure this opinion may improve itſelf inſenſibly upon my affections to a very ill conſequence, and invite me to an uncharitable and unfriendly

ly deportment; which if it do, as it muſt prove injurious to my Neighbour, ſo muſt it be prejudicial to my Eternal intereſt; wherefore 'tis plain, that it behoves me much to take care that my zeal for an opinion do not deſtroy my Charity: I will therefore conſider Faith with reference to theſe 3 things, Holineſs, Peace, Charity.

Of Faith with reſpect to its influence on our Lives.

§. 1. If I conſider the Chriſtian Faith with regard to the great end of it, *Holineſs*, I obſerve that the Goſpel contains two great things, the *Knowledge of God, and of Jeſus Chriſt*; *This is life eternal* Joh. 17. 3. *to know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent*: This knowledge contains in it all the *Obligations* imaginable to *a holy life*, and *ſecures* the *hopes* and *comforts* of Chriſtians upon an unmovable foundation; and this knowledge agrees perfectly with the *nature* and *ends* of Religion.

The belief of God and Jeſus Chriſt ſufficient.

1. Firſt, *With the Nature of Religion*: Religion is nothing but the true and ſpiritual worſhip of the only true God, who is a Spirit: Now all the worſhip we are capable of paying him, conſiſts either in the *Affections* of the Soul, or,

Actions

Actions of the Body, ſo that that Belief or Knowledge which tends to render theſe proper and acceptable to God, is directly conformable to the Nature of Religion; the Goſpel therefore hath diſcovered God to us, 1. *One*, infinite in *Wiſdom*, *Power*, *Holineſs* and *Goodneſs*. And ſecondly, as he ſtands more particularly related to us in the Work of Creation, Providence, Redemption. All this put together proves him to be *God*; and to be *Ours*; it evinces his *Excellency* and his *Supremacy*; it repreſents him infinitely *Lovely* and *Adorable* in himſelf, and entitles him to all the ſervice and affection, which *Dominion*, *Love* and *Munificence* can lay a juſt claim to, all which is enforcement enough (which is the uſe of Faith) to our Duty, when we are acquainted with it.

Which that we might be, and that we might have aſſiſtance to enable us to perform it, and that there might be a Proviſion made for the pardon of our errours, God in his infinite Wiſdom thought it neceſſary to ſend his Son into the World, and therefore it is neceſſary to eternal Life to believe in Jeſus Chriſt

Chriſt whom he hath ſent; and about *him* we are inform'd in the Goſpel, that he is the Son of God; that he was made Man, and lived here upon Earth, that he might teach us our duty, and leave us an Example of it; that he was crucified for our Sins; that he aroſe again from the Dead, and after forty Days, ſojourning here, he was received into Glory, and became the Head and Prince of his Church, and ſhall at the laſt day judge both the quick and the dead.

The belief of all which illuſtrates the Juſtice and Mercy of the Moſt High God; aſſures us of the truth of his Promiſes; *i. e.* The *aſſiſtance* of the Spirit of God, and eternal Rewards; and ſuperadds moſt powerful Obligations to Obedience, and lays an unſhaken foundation of *Joy* and *Peace* by ſhewing us on what account our ſins are pardon'd, and our ſervices accepted. So that now there will need but few words to prove,

2. That this knowledge doth directly ſerve the *End and Aims of Religion*, which muſt be *God's Glory* and *Man's Happineſs*, the former is already prov'd;

for to *Glorifie* and to *Worſhip* God are equivalent terms; the latter eaſily appears thus, in that this belief doth, 1. Reſcue us from *the power* of ſin, by powerful motives, and endearments to, and, by ſupernatural aſſiſtances of vertue; and, 2. From the *guilt* of it by the blood of Chriſt: and ſo it frees us from the miſery of unruly paſſions, and from the ſlaviſh Fears of Death and Hell. 3. It compoſes our minds in all the various changes of the world, by the firm perſuaſion of the wiſdom, power and goodneſs of the God, who governs it. And laſtly, it delights and ſatisfies our Souls by the diſcovery of Objects fit for their love and enjoyment; which is no leſs eſſentially neceſſary to our preſent happineſs than any of the former; for Man being a weak and empty Creature, cannot, like God, find his happineſs in the *fruition* of *himſelf*, but muſt ſeek it in ſomething elſe, which muſt be able to fill all his deſires and appetites, and ſatisfie all his Capacities of enjoyment.

The Bleſſed effects of this faith.

O happy Chriſtian, that conquers the World and himſelf, that is freed from all fears

fears and jealouſies about a future State, and enjoys the raviſhing Objects of a glorious Faith; well may the holy Spirit make up the deſcription of this State, of characters of Joy, Peace and Hope.

Peace of Conſcience, with regard to Faith how attained.

§ 2. But now Secondly, that this Happineſs may be entire, it is neceſſary to ſecure the *peace of my* own boſom, as to the matters of Faith: and this may be diſturbed two ways, either by doubting of the *Truth*, or elſe the *Senſe* of Divine Revelation: we are tempted to the former commonly by this Argument, *Theſe things cannot be, therefore the Book, which contains the Hiſtory of them, is an impoſture.* To the latter, by much the ſame Argument, *Theſe things cannot be, therefore* (ſince we cannot deny the authority of Scripture) we muſt explain them in ſome other ſenſe: Both proceed upon this bottom, *I cannot underſtand or conceive the poſſibility of this or that, therefore it cannot be.*

To ſecure my ſelf from the firſt of theſe, I conſider the infinite Majeſty of the God we worſhip, and the trifling, dwarfiſh Capacities of us Men, and then I wonder not, that ſome Articles ſhould ra-

ther *ſurprize* and *dazle* my faculties than *enlighten* them.

To expect otherwiſe, were to forget the nature of myſteries, and of myſelf. It is true, to believe without a Reaſon for it, is Credulity, not Faith; but then Revelation is the higheſt Reaſon for the belief of things ſupernatural, there being no other means left us to attain to their knowledge; ſo that all that Reaſon can have to do here, is not to diſcuſs the *probability* of the Article revealed, but the *Authority* of the revelation, and this being once clear'd, to ſurrender up our doubts and ſcruples: which is (weighing the ſhallowneſs of our underſtandings, and the depths of myſteries) no more than in a tedious long journey, our eyes being dim, and the way unknown and intricate, to abandon our ſelves to the conduct of a kind, skilful and faithful Guide. The Sum of all is this, Man is born like a wild Aſs's Colt, and arrives into a rational Creature by painful inſtitution, and ſlow progreſſions, the Soul being clouded by Paſſions, impriſoned and limited by ſcanty Organs, perverted by unhappy prejudices; and therefore

therefore 'tis a very wild and extravagant piece of folly, to make ones own underſtanding the great ſtandard and meaſure of *all truth*, or to determine, that the utmoſt of our Fancy is the utmoſt extent of Nature, and of the Deity too; for on the other hand, God is a great and *incomprehenſible* Being, *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be prais'd, and his greatneſs is unſearchable*, Pſal. 145. 3. and therefore by a clear conſequence, our Faith is not the leſs reaſonable, becauſe it is the more *reſign'd*; an awful diſtance and a modeſt Faith is as eſſential a part of Holineſs, as the conformity of our Wills to the Divine Law. Theſe very conſiderations will ſerve to ſecure me.

2. Againſt all doubts, about the *Senſe* of Revelation, for the received and general ſenſe appears to be the more natural and obvious, and therefore no objection lies againſt it, but what is already remov'd, the ſeeming impoſſibility of it: and if it be farther conſider'd, that the Goſpel was addreſs'd to perſons of very ordinary endowments; and therefore to be underſtood in its

moſt obvious ſenſe; That it is moſt conformable to that humble infant Spirit Chriſt requires in his Diſciples, to qualifie them for the reception of his Doctrine, to Believe rather than Diſpute: That the receiv'd ſenſe is the ſenſe of the whole Catholick Church, That an Errour of Judgment, which ſprings from Humility not Pride, will be rather pitied than puniſh'd by a good God, this altogether will eaſily raiſe my Faith above all ſcruple and wavering: Eſpecially if I add to all this, this one Obſervation, That the Adverſaries of any one Article of Faith, have never made up one entire Body, but ſeveral Sects, divided by numerous and contradictory Tenents built up upon different Foundations, that they have never been able to propagate any thing but wild and unaccountable fancies; that they have ſet Scripture at a more irreconcilable diſtance from it ſelf, and inſtead of clearing its myſterious ſenſes, have made its plaineſt ſenſe a Myſtery.

From all this I am obliged to reſolve, not to gaze, and ſtare upon Majeſty, leſt I be blinded by the ſhine of it; but worſhip

ſhip and adore, that I may be bleſt by it. I'll look upon my Creed like the Ark of God, 2 *Sam.* 6. It muſt not be toucht by *a bold hand*, though to ſupport it, all its Articles are like the Stones of the Altar, *Exod.* 20. To liſt up a tool of a Workman upon them, tho with deſign to poliſh and adorn, nothing elſe, but to profane and unhallow them.

If after all this I chance to Err, I do "not doubt, but that the purity of my "intention, the diligence of my inqui-"ry, the meekneſs and intireneſs of my "Reſignation, will, through the mer-"cies and goodneſs of a gracious God, "ſecure my Heaven, and render my "errour innocent and harmleſs. All that is behind now is in the

Charity in Faith, how be preſerved.

§. 3. Third place, to preſerve *my Charity* for my Neighbour, leſt that Faith which ſhould be the ſtrong engagement to union, become the unhappy Inſtrument of Diviſions. To this end I conſider, 1. That the Controverſies now on foot in Chriſtendom are not about the Truth, but ſenſe of Divine Revelation; none at all calling into queſtion

the veracity, but the meaning of God; and therefore I cannot conceive the Glory of God any more leſſen'd or injur'd by variety of Opinions than by variety of Capacities; unleſs in their conſequence.

2. As the bare aſſent to a truth doth not ſave, ſo I ſee no reaſon, why the holding of an Errour ſhould damn, unleſs it be ſuch as hath a ſinful Original or Iſſue, or ſuch as is not conſiſtent with the Honour and Glory of the Moſt High God; and indeed no Opinion which leſſens the Majeſty of the Moſt High God, can be taken up by any one profeſſing Chriſtianity, but that it muſt begin or end in Sin; But yet the aggravation or extenuation of the guilt of a Man thus erring, may depend upon ſo many circumſtances, as Capacity, Education, Means and Opportunity of better information, the ſtrength of prejudices, and ſuch like, that he muſt be left to the judgment of God alone, and my duty, as a private Chriſtian, is to love and pray for him, and to endeavour his reducement by all the pious Subtilties I can. This is the general Rule of the Apoſtle, *Let not the Weak*

Judge

Judge the Strong, nor the Strong deſpiſe the Weak.

"I will live in the peaceful temper "of theſe perſuaſions; happy in the en- "joyment of a ſmooth and ſettled Calm "re ſign'd up to God, ſtanch and con- "ſiſtent in my ſelf, and poſſeſs'd by cha- "ritable hopes of my Neighbour: I'll "endeavour to keep a Conſcience void "of offence towards God and towards "Man; and then I hope I may at laſt re- "ſign my Spirit into the hands of a faith- "ful Creator, in the Joys and Tranſ- "ports of this Precious Chriſtian Faith.

The Prayer.

GLorious and incomprehenſible God, ſuppreſs in me all proud thoughts, all wild and wanton Curioſities, and keep my Soul in the humble frame of new born babes! Thou dwelleſt in Light inacceſſible, my Soul in a cloud of Fleſh and Blood; my Faculties are weak and tainted, and thy Light dazling; and therefore it is not for me, Lord, it is not for me, ſaucily to diſcuſs, or pragmatically to determine of, but humbly to receive, and heartily

heartily to embrace thoſe Myſteries, which thou, a God of Truth, of Goodneſs, and of Power, haſt vouchſafed to reveal to us by the Son of thy Boſom: Lord, I confeſs, that though theſe Myſteries have a dark, they have a bright ſide too, for though I cannot ſee through them, yet I ſee enough to oblige me to worſhip thee in Humility and Love, and theſe, theſe, I hope, will ſecure me in thy Love through Chriſt. Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief; "enlight-"en my blindneſs! quicken and enliven "my dulneſs! ſupport my frailties! diſ-"perſe my Paſſions! free me from all the "prejudices which clog my ſinful nature; "and finally beget in me an earneſt deſire after thoſe bliſsful Manſions, where my Faith ſhall be ſwallowed up in viſions. A-men, bleſſed Jeſus.

Directions to thoſe of meaner Capacity, concerning their Faith or Creed.

Thus I have conſider'd the Chriſtian Faith, and ſecur'd my own Peace: But there are multitudes of People of a lower Rank and Capacity, who may not, it may be, reach the deſign of this Section, who are diſtracted by the numerous Controverſies every where on foot, and frighted by the raſh zeal of their

their Abettors: For the ſatisfaction of ſuch, I conſider,

That it is eaſie to deduce from the Goſpel, 1. That the Almighty will judge men by their ſeveral meaſures and opportunities. 2. That the great Fundamentals of Religion are clear as daylight, and therefore the Goſpel is called *Light*, and the *Grace of God* is ſaid *to appear unto all men*, which, though I ſuppoſe primarily meant in oppoſition to the darkneſs of Gentiliſm, and in ſome meaſure of Judaiſm too, and to that narrower limitation of this Grace under the Moſaical Oeconomy, implies with all the clearneſs of the Goſpel, of which were there no other proof, this one would ſuffice, That the Goſpel was deſign'd for the benefit of all Mankind, and more immediately preach'd to the Poor and Silly, and refuſe of the World: The conſequence of this is, that it ſeems, at leaſt to me, wholly improbable, that any body ſhould be betray'd into a neceſſity of Erring in fundamentals, unleſs they be acceſſory to their own Error, and therefore this being once granted, I may reſolve all I can think of neceſſa-

ry

ry for the Multitude into two directions.

1. That holding faſt to manifeſt Fundamentals, they, for the reſt, ſubmit themſelves to the Government they are under, which will be ſafe for them upon three accounts. 1. That the points controverted are ſuch, which they are not of neceſſity obliged to know. 2. That they themſelves are not capable of making any ſolid inquiry into them, and therefore to reſign themſelves to thoſe ſet over them, is the utmoſt of their duty. 3. That in this caſe, their ſubmiſſion to the publick Authority of the Church they are of, is an act of Obedience and Humility, and moſt conformable to the command of God, and the Peace and Unity of the World.]

2. That they never prefer a doubtful opinion to the prejudice of a plain Precept or Duty; a Man may go to Heaven, though he be not of this or that opinion, but without Obedience and Charity he cannot; but to do this, is to ſtickle for a Sect, in violation of Obedience and Charity, and to prefer an humour before ones Duty, which is a certain Symptom of

of a mind infatuated by Pride, or perverted by Intereſt.

CHAP. III.

Of Chriſtianity with reſpect to Practice. Sect. 1. *Of being Good. The true notion of Goſpel Holineſs ſtated. Negative Righteouſneſs: Poſitive or Affirmative Righteouſneſs: The Principles and Degrees of it.* §. 2. *Of doing Good. What may not be the motives to a Solitary Life. An active Life,* 1. *more Excellent,* 2. *more Neceſſary than a Solitary or Contemplative one.* §. 3. *Rules relating to doing Good.*

Sect. 1.

OF Practice in general, which contains *Being* and *Doing* Good.

We are born into a World full of *Snares* and *Temptations*; and we our ſelves are Creatures *blind*, and yet *wilful*; *weak* and yet *wanton* too; and upon theſe accounts we are vouchſaf'd the Favour of Divine Revelation, to conduct us through our Pilgrimage, to enable

ble us to fight the good fight of Faith, and to prevent our miſcarrying through the Deceitfulneſs of Sin, and the frailty of humane nature: and therefore whoever doth not improve this gift of God, into all theſe Advantages and Benefits, defeats the deſign of Heaven, and receives the Grace of God in vain.

Beſides all this, the great Author of all things hath declar'd himſelf a God, *jealous of his honour, and delighted in the happineſs of his Creatures*; from whence I naturally infer, that *that* only can be a deſign worthy of Chriſt's deſcent into Earth, which promotes the *Glory* of God, and the *Happineſs* of Man, and that is, only Goodneſs or Holineſs, concerning which I will,

1. Enquire what kind of Goodneſs or Holineſs that is, which the Goſpel of Chriſt requires: And,

2. Prove that it tends to advance the *Glory* of God, and happineſs of Mankind; which will ſerve not only as a proof of its being the ſcope and drift of Chriſtianity, but alſo for a ſtrong enforcement, and motive to it.

§ 1. I

§. 1. I will ſtate the notion of *Goſpel Holineſs*. St *Paul*, *Tit.* 2. 12. tells us plainly that this conſiſts in *denying Ungodlineſs and Worldly Luſts*, and in *Living Righteouſly, Soberly and Godly* in *this preſent World, looking for the Bleſſed Hope and the Glorious Appearance of the Great God and our Saviour Chriſt Jeſus*. Now the leaſt that this can import, is that we are to abſtain from all plain and open violations of the Commandments; ſuch as are, 1. All debaſing of God in our imaginations, and depraved acts of worſhip conſequent to this, and all unthankfulneſs to him. Secondly, all ſorts of Falſhood and Injuſtice. Thirdly, all kind of unnatural Luſts and Exceſs, deſtructive to our Health or Reaſon, all this being nothing elſe but the *Ungodlineſs* and *Worldly Luſts*, which we are to deny, and the very Heathens by the light of Nature, *Rom.* 1. 32. know, *that they who do ſuch things are worthy of Death.*

What is meant by Holineſs.

Negative Holineſs.

This I ſay is the leaſt, that can be imported by the words of that Text, *Tit.* 2. 12. ſome there are who live and talk, as if there were nothing more, nothing

nothing higher included in it, ſo deſirous are they that Religion ſhould be gentle and eaſie, that they ſeem to think that it implies nothing more than a meer negative Righteouſneſs, or abſtinence from ſcandalous Crimes.

They tell us, that it is plain that the Scripture, ſpeaking with reſpect to the Life of the Gentiles which was depraved below the light of Nature, doth by mortification, moſtly intend an abſtinence from thoſe Actions amongſt them which were manifeſt Tranſgreſſions of the Law. *Mortifie therefore your Members which are upon the Earth; Fornication, Uncleanneſs*, &c. Col. 3. 5.

Next they tell us, that all Wiſe Men who underſtand humane Nature and the World, embrace Chriſtianity themſelves, and recommend it to others under the Character of a Debonnair and Complaiſant Religion.

To all this I eaſily anſwer, 1. That at this rate the way to Life ſeems ſo exceeding broad, and the gate ſo very wide, that unleſs a man be born with a moſt villanous temper, and that be improv'd by a looſe and undiſciplined Education

cation, he may make a ſhift to enter in without much ſtriving or ſtruggling, which ſeems to me very oppoſite to the Affection of our *Saviour*, *Strait is the Gate and narrow is the way that leadeth to Life, and few there be that find it.*

Secondly, 'tis true that mortification in *Scripture*, relates eſpecially to thoſe *Luſts* and Crimes rife amongſt *Jew* and *Gentile*, but then I muſt mind you, that Mortification is but one part of Chriſtian *Holineſs*; and that Abſtinence from groſs Sin, is but half of Mortification. And Thirdly, I hope thoſe that ſpeak ſuch ſoft things of Chriſtianity, do intend it of a ſpiritual pleaſure, or elſe of that more perfect ſtate, wherein they that are arriv'd at it know how to abound, becauſe having obtain'd a more compleat Conqueſt over the Body, and the World, they are not ſo eaſily enſnared as new Converts.

Now therefore I conclude, Secondly, that living *Righteouſly*, *Soberly*, and *Godly*, *Tit.* 2. 12. muſt ſignify much more than the denying *Ungodlineſs* and *Worldly Luſts*: the meer ceaſing to do evil is not all that the *Scripture* means by *being* and *doing*

good. In a word, there is a Poſitive, an Affirmative as well as a Negative *Righteouſneſs* required in the *Goſpel*; and to the end we may not form a wrong notion of this, I will a little conſider its principles and degrees.

1. Acts of Sobriety and Juſtice, perform'd, without any deliberation, by the meer inclination of Nature, (if ſuch may be) are meerly *natural* Actions, neither good nor evil; neither rewardable nor puniſhable.

2. Acts of Sobriety and Juſtice, perform'd upon the ſole inſtigation of *pleaſure* and *convenience*, which attends ſuch a Life in this preſent World, are very proper and natural effects of *Reaſon*, but under the Goſpel they do not conſtitute any part of the *Righteouſneſs* of the *Kingdom* of *Heaven*, becauſe *our* Actions are to proceed from *nobler* motives; not that I deny but that to us Chriſtians, *worldly Happineſs* may be a very lawful incentive to Holineſs, but then it muſt be in its place, not the ſole and great, but a ſubordinate inducement. Thus tho the Apoſtle invites us to goodneſs by *Praiſe* and a *good Report*, yet he, who

who is *vertuous* meerly that he may be *famed* for it, is a vain-glorious Sinner: ſo though the promiſes of this Life annext to Godlineſs, may encourage us to imbrace it, yet if any man be godly meerly for preſent pleaſure and happineſs in this Life, he is but a *worldly* man; nor do I here only mean that worldly pleaſure muſt not be the *ſole*, but that it muſt not be the *great*, the *principal* allurement to Religion; ſomething it may contribute, but it muſt be in its place and its degree.

We are to juſtifie of abſtinence the motives of it.

3. To deny any ſin upon the account of Religion, *i. e.* The Fear and Love of God, and hopes of Salvation; is certainly an acceptable Sacrifice; but becauſe in all our Actions there are generally many motives twiſted together, and becauſe man out of *fondneſs* for himſelf is very apt to attribute the work to that motive which it is his intereſt ſhould be uppermoſt? therefore it will very nearly concern every one, to examine ſeriouſly the degrees and ſtrength of this Faith he pretends to; for peradventure, though this Faith be ſtrong enough to reſtrain him from *wild and unnatural*

Luſts, becauſe it leaves him enjoyments and pleaſures enough to entertain him with more delight in their ſtead; and gives him up to a Life no leſs *ſenſual*, tho the inſtances of ſenſuality be more *regular*: Yet it may not be powerful enough to crucifie all worldly and carnal affections, and to force him to do perfect violence to his Inclinations: his fondneſs for the pleaſures of this Life may be too ſtubborn to give way to a Faith which is not more *deeply rooted*, nor arm'd and wing'd with holy *paſſion*; and the Body may be too high fed to ſurrender up all its ſatisfactions upon the demands of a drowſie Faith; ſo that the man doth not *entirely* deny *himſelf* becauſe Religion commands it; but thus far he thinks fit to comply with Religion becauſe it doth him no harm, it doth not entrench upon his *ſenſual enjoyment*: and if this be his Caſe, though the man may have call'd it Faith to the aſſiſtance of Reaſon, yet he doth not ſuffer it to Reign, and by conſequence his Life is ſtill the Life of *Senſe*, and not of *Faith*. Faith comes in but ſlantingly and collaterally into his Life; it is not the

the main and chief inducement to his Actions.

4. And laſtly. A Life led in meer *abſtinence* from evil, and yet an allowance of the utmoſt freedoms we can with innocence enjoy (upon ſuppoſal that ſuch a man could ſo love God and Heaven, as to be able to renounce all, when called thereto, a ſuppoſition I can very difficultly be reconcil'd to) is but the *minimum morale*; if Holineſs, yet the loweſt degree of it; and the Goſpel ſeems to me to have a farther aim, to propoſe a greater height, and to expect from its Votaries a nobler *perfection*; which will eaſily appear to any one who ſhall diligently conſider, 1. The *great Motives* to Holineſs, which it contains, that is, a declaration of the Divine Nature, *Jo.* 1. 18. The infinite Love of God to Mankind, manifeſted in the bleſſed Jeſus, and the full Diſcovery of Life and Immortality; or ſecondly, the *mighty aſſiſtances* it promiſes, that is, the bleſſed Spirit of God, and Divine Providence, employed either in *preventing* us from falling into temptations too big for this imperfect

Poſitive Holineſs.

ſtate, or elſe in finding a way to our *eſcape* out of them: or, thirdly, the immediate end of Chriſtian Religion, that is, whilſt we are here on *Earth* to fit us for *Heaven*: He that ſhall ſeriouſly lay to heart theſe three things, will be forc'd to conclude, That in all reaſon, the Goſpel muſt require of us ſomething proportionable to the extraordinaty motives, the powerful aſſiſtances, and the glorious end it aſſures and propoſes to its Children; and this muſt be ſomething more than a meer *negative* righteouſneſs; for it is unreaſonable, that this *Light* ſhould beget in us no greater degrees of love and fear for God, than what *natural Reaſon* might; or if it doth, that the *inſtances* of our Obedience, *now under the Goſpel*, ſhould be only ſuch, as the ſtrength of Nature might have enabled men to comply with *under Gentiliſm*, though it muſt be confeſt not ſo eaſily as now.

Agreeable to this Doctrine our Holy Saviour in his Sermon on the Mount, (which is the Rule and Standard of the Chriſtian Life) ſets us a more *exalted* pattern: Not only to be true in our words,

words, and *juſt* in our dealings with our Neighbour, but to be *Charitable*, *Gentle*, *Patient*, and to return *good* for *evil* to our very Enemies: not only to avoid all *unnatural Luſts* and *wild Exceſſes*, but alſo to be *pure* and *holy*, to admit of no *ſenſual Fancy* or *unchaſte Looks*, or idle Words: to *faſt* and *afflict* our ſelves: *Bleſſed are they which mourn.* He forbids us all *Ambition* and *Covetouſneſs*, and *Vain-glory*, not meerly on the account of *injuſtice*, for that doth not always unavoidably cleave to them, but as they are the Acts of a *worldly mind*, which is perfectly contrary to *poverty of Spirit*, and to *laying up our Treaſures in Heaven*, and to *the taking up of the Croſs of Chriſt*, ſo powerfully and ſweetly recommended. Our duty to God is couch'd all along in the whole Diſcourſe, but the Acts of Worſhip more plainly expreſs'd are *loving* him as a Father, *praying* to him, endeavouring to promote *his Glory*, and chearfully to obey his Will, *relying* upon him for aſſiſtance in our *ſpiritual* Warfare, for *Proviſion*, *Protection* and *Deliverance* in this life; and add to all

this, this one circumſtance, That all this is to be done with *delight*, *conſtancy* and *vigour*, (implied in thoſe general Precepts, *Bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs*; *Lay up for yourſelves treaſures in heaven*; —— *For where your treaſure is there will your heart be alſo*; *Seek ye firſt the Kingdom of God and the Righteouſneſs thereof*, and *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate*, &c.) and then you have our Saviour's Senſe of Chriſtian Holineſs.

If we conſult his Diſciples, the beſt Expoſitors of their Maſters Text, we ſhall find the whole of Religion compris'd in two things. The *Mortification* of the *outward man*, and the *Reſurrection of the inward*, by which they mean, as appears from *Coloſſ.* 3. *A ſetting our affections upon things above, and not upon things on the earth*, from whence I will infer two concluſions.

1. That our affections are an eſſential part of Holineſs, that it is not enough to *approve* of *inviſible things* in our underſtanding, and then *act* not as men who love God and Heaven and Goodneſs,

neſs, but as men who ſee it unavoidably *neceſſary* to do ſomething, and therefore go as far as is conſiſtent with that *carnality* they yet reſolve to gratify; but that we muſt love them alſo; and this to that degree, that it may be able to extinguiſh our *paſſion* for the *World*; and therefore,

2. The life we are to lead, muſt be ſuch a one as may moſt tend to enkindle in us *holy paſſions* for the things above, a *delight* in the ſurvey of our *hopes*, and *deſires* of entring into the preſence of God; all which cannot be attain'd but by frequent *Prayer*, *Meditation*, *Hearing* and *Reading* of Gods Word, the holy *Communion*, and heavenly *Diſcourſes*: and on the other ſide, our Life muſt be ſuch as may moſt effectually tend to *take off our affections* from the world, and beget in us a generous *contempt* of it, which can never be affected, but by repeated acts of *ſelf-denial*, *faſting*, *watching*, *meditating*, on the example of a *crucified* Saviour, the *glories* and *pleaſures* of another Life, the *vanity* and yet *bewitcheries* of this fading one. I may be confident, that a conſtant careſſing the

ſenſes

ſenſes with feaſting, drinking, wanton dalliances, the pomp and vanities of Life, cannot be a proper method to the *mortification* of the outward man or *vivification* of the inward.

So that if a very *abſtemious Life* (as to the general courſe of it) be not requir'd, as an eſſential part of Holineſs, yet it is neceſſary as the means and inſtrument of it: conformable to this whole diſcourſe is that of S. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 7. 29, 30. *But this I ſay, Brethren, the time is ſhort; it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they poſſeſs'd not; and they that uſe this world as not abuſing it; for the faſhion of this world paſſeth away:* Where we are not only interdicted unlawful pleaſures, but forbidden to give our ſelves up to lawful ones; and commanded to uſe ſuch *moderation* as may become men fully perſwaded of the *ſhortneſs* and *vanity* of this Life, and poſſeſs'd by the expectations of a *better.*

The

The Sum of all is this, The Chriſtian State is a State of *extraordinary Holineſs* and *Purity*; 'tis a *new Nature*, wrought by *Principles*, *Motives*, *Aſſiſtances*, different from thoſe of the *natural* Man; 'Tis, in one word, To be *heavenly minded*; and therefore that courſe of Life, which can beſt ſerve to encreaſe this bleſſed temper, is the Chriſtians Duty; and that courſe which quenches it, which *ſoftens* and *ſenſualizes* us, is inconſiſtent with Chriſtianity, and inconſiſtent with Regeneration; for if we be riſen with Chriſt, we ſhall not only *love*, but *ſeek* thoſe things which are above; it being impoſſible for any man to live, (when he can chuſe) quite contrary to his own deſires; ſo that he who loves God need not be told, that he muſt *Pray* and *Meditate*, and *Communicate*, and be *doing*, &c. When he knows he can enjoy him here below no way elſe; he that hates Sin, and loves Holineſs, needs not be told that he muſt lead an abſtemious Life, when he knows that feaſting and drinking, *&c.* do feed the body into wantonneſs and luſt, and quench the holy flame

flame of Love, and indiſpoſe it for Religious Duties.

From all this it is plain, Religion is in its eſſence an inward and ſpiritual Holineſs: outward actions can be conſidered but two ways, either as the *means* and *inſtruments*, or elſe as the *fruits* and *effects* of Holineſs; and both ways a ſober temperate Life (as to the general courſe of it) is indiſpenſibly neceſſary; though I cannot here deny, but that there muſt be an allowance made for the *variety of tempers*, and the *different ſtrengths* of grace, *&c.* proportionable to each Man's different caſe.

Having thus given an Account of the nature of the Holineſs which the Goſpel requires, I come

Holineſs neceſſary to promote God's Glory.

2. To ſhew that it tends to promote *God's Glory* and *Man's Happineſs*.

1. *God's Glory.*

1. Though a right underſtanding be wholly neceſſary to, yet it ſelf is no part of Divine Worſhip; it is not meer knowledge or belief of a Truth, but Love, and Fear, and Obedience by which we honour God, and devote our ſelves to him; there is no where more light of knowledge

knowledge (Heaven excepted) than in thoſe Regions of darkneſs where the moſt impious Spirits dwell, but no body will ſay that they there Worſhip God. 'Tis true an underſtanding illuminated is certainly a beautiful thing, but then if it be join'd to an unſanctified Will, the Man in the whole is the moſt deform'd and loathſome thing imaginable, for he is made up of two the moſt diſproportionable and contradictory things, as if he were formed as the Poet fancies men, growing out of the ſlime of the Deluge, the upper parts enlivened Fleſh and Blood, the lower Mud and Clay; the light of the underſtanding enhances the guilt of malice and degeneracy in the Will; for to ſee God, and not love and obey him is ſtrangely malicious, but if his beauty be not adorn'd by things that have no eyes to ſee it, 'tis not to be wondred at. *If ye had been blind, then had ye had no ſin.*

2. *The Heavens*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *declare the Glory of God*, &c. Their brightneſs and vaſtneſs, whilſt they engage our wonder, invite us to the contemplation

templation of the Power, and Infiniteneſs, and Majeſty of their Architect; ſo Holy and Good men declare his glory too, for being renew'd after his Image in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, they repreſent to the World an imperfect draught of ſome of the glorious Attributes of the God they worſhip: thus as the Power of Miracles imparted to the Apoſtles, forc'd the beholders *to glorifie God, who had given ſuch gifts unto men*; ſo too Chriſt exhorts his Diſciples *to let their light ſhine before Men, that when they ſee thoſe good works, they may glorify God who is in Heaven*; induc'd by the lovelineſs of that Goodneſs deriv'd from him, as the other were by his Power.

3. It is Goodneſs by which we own a God, and acknowledge him to be ours. Divine Worſhip is the Confeſſion of our Meanneſs and his Majeſty; and conformity to his Laws is the fulleſt proof we can give of our Allegience and his Supremacy; and therefore they who live irreligiouſly, let them pretend to believe and think what they will, are ſaid to be without God in the World, and to deny him in their works.

4. Ho-

4. Holineſs or Goodneſs is really Divine Worſhip, and therefore it is in Scripture deſign'd to be Religion, and Wiſdom, and Knowledge. *To know God this is Wiſdom, and to depart from evil this is Underſtanding; to do Juſtice, to relieve the Poor and Needy, is not this to know God*, ſaith the Lord: *Pure Religion and undefiled is this, to viſit the Fatherleſs and Widows in their affliction, and to keep ones ſelf unſpotted from the World.* More plainly; What is Worſhip, but the cleaving to God with purity and earneſtneſs of Affections, acting in conformity to his Law as thoſe Affections ſhall invite and inable us; And this is the very ſame thing with Holineſs. So that it is plain, that Holineſs and Goodneſs contribute to God's Glory, the two only ways we are capable of glorifying him, that is by our own particular Worſhip, and by the influence our example hath upon others.

§ 2. Holineſs is moſt ſerviceable to the Happineſs of Man *here and hereafter.* *Holineſs neceſſary to the happineſs of man in this life.*

1. *Here.*

1. *Here.*

1. "All the advantage of peaceful "Government, friendly Neighbourhood, "comfortable and cloſer Unions, and "Pleaſant Retirements, depend on and ariſe from Goodneſs: But ſuppoſe the World planted with Covetouſneſs inſtead of Juſtice, Pride inſtead of Meekneſs, Cruelty inſtead of Compaſſion, Revenge and Malice inſtead of Mildneſs and Charity, Falſhood and Lying inſtead of Conſtancy and Truth, *&c.* and imagine, if you can, whether all Societies would not be torn into as many Factions as there are croſs intereſts and oppoſite paſſions, whither any Commerce could be juſt and ſmooth, any tie laſting and delightful, whether it were poſſible to find ſecurity or pleaſure either in a private or a publick Life.

2. "It is Holineſs which beſt ſecures "a man's inward peace, guards and arms "him againſt thoſe impreſſions which "outward temptations make, preſcribes "bounds to our Deſires, ſcatters our "Fears, confirms our Hopes, raiſes our "Affections to things of true and laſting

"Ex-

Excellency; that is, in few words, it not only ſettles our peace by eſtabliſhing the empire of the mind over the inferiour Appetites, but alſo provides for our pleaſure, by filling the mind with ſpiritual Joys, and Peace, and Hope.

2. *Hereafter.* *In the life to come.*

Goodneſs is wholly neceſſary, 1. To recommend us to the Love of God, whoſe infinite purity and excellency cannot approve of any thing that is ſinful and unholy. *This is the Meſſage that we have received of him, that God is Light*, &c. Where you ſee that the Law founded in his Nature, hath an intrinſick reſemblance to his own Holineſs; and by conſequence he can neither alter it, nor diſpenſe with its Obſervation. 2. To qualifie us for Heaven, for it is Goodneſs which weans the Soul from all fondneſs for the Body and the World, and poſſeſſes it with an intenſe Love of God and Holineſs, which two things do firſt capacitate it for that World, wherein God, and holy Spirits dwell; and ſecondly recommend it to greater degrees of Glory and Happineſs in it.

Thus have I given an account of the nature of Goſpel Righteous or Holineſs, and demonſtrated its ſerviceableneſs to the great ends of Religion, God's Glory, and Man's Happineſs: I need not after all that I have ſaid prove the neceſſity of it; thus the Scripture aſſerts in expreſs words, *Without Holineſs no man ſhall ſee God*, Heb. 12. 14. *Not every one that ſays unto me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven*, Matt. 7. 21. This was the great buſineſs of our Saviour's Life, he was ſtill inſtructing men in the doctrine of the Kingdom, that is, Godlineſs, Righteouſneſs and Sobriety. His Miracles did confirm the Divinity of his Perſon, and this was carefully ſecur'd, to gain authority to his Doctrine.

Abſurdity of Faith without Holineſs.

I will conclude this Chapter with the abſurdity of the contrary Doctrine. Of what uſe would the Goſpel be in relation either to God's Glory, or Man's happineſs, if it were only to be believ'd, and not obey'd? To what purpoſe is light come into the World, if men may ſtill love Darkneſs? To what purpoſe did the

the Son, who lay in the boſom of the Father, reveal him more glorioufly to us, if, knowing him as God, it be yet lawful for us not to glorifie him as ſuch ?——

And as inſignificant would this opinion render it to the happineſs of Man ; for of what uſe will all theexcellent rules of Juſtice, Charity, Meekneſs and Temperance prove, if we continue peeviſh and revengeful, intemperate and luſtful, *&c.* To what purpoſe are the fuller diſcoveries of another World, Life and Immortality, and the Belief of Jeſus being the Son of God, if they do not enable us to conquer the world,and mortifie the fleſh ? And if I walk according to the Laws of the Fleſh, *i. e.* Violate the Laws of the Spirit, can I chuſe but dread a God whom I have wrong'd. And will not *unruly Paſſions* and as *troubled Conſcience* make a *Chriſtian* as miſerable as a *Jew* or *Heathen* ?

If Goodneſs now be the end and drift of the holy belief of Chriſtians, then I infer,

1. That the *beſt Man* is the beſt Son of the Church, and he whoſe affections

are more rais'd and heavenly, and hath leaſt of that mixture of ſenſuality, is of the higheſt form in the School of Chriſt, becauſe he doth beſt anſwer the deſign of his Lord, and walks in ſome meaſure as he walk'd.

2. That the moſt infallible characters of a true Faith are to be taken from the *Government* of our Paſſions; our *conqueſt* o'er the World, and the *encreaſe* of our inward *joy*, and *peace*, and *hope*. Good Lord! How apt are we to put a cheat upon the World and our ſelves, to perſwade it and our ſelves that we believe, though there be no change in our Souls and Converſations, and therefore conſequently we do nothing leſs. I ſhall hereafter never think that I believe aright till I have a *Love* for all his *Commandments*, till I can *meditate delightfully*, *pray vigorouſly*, *rely conſtantly*, *obey readily*, *ſuffer patiently*, *rejoyce humbly*, *expect reverently*, *and* (happy is me, if I attain that height) *earneſtly too*, the hour of my death, or the appearance of my Lord. I ſhall never hereafter think, that I have ſtudied or known divine truth to any purpoſe, till the Truth hath made

made me free, reſcued me from the bondage of Sin and fears of Death.

The Prayer.

THou Holy, Pure and Eternal Spirit, who canſt not indure iniquity! who doeſt ſo love goodneſs, that thou haſt ſent thy Son into the World to promote it; his Life and his Death, his Pains and his Blood were ſpent in this Cauſe. O enable thy poor Servant, who names the name of Chriſt, to hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, and depart from iniquity.

Lord, let thy truth and thy Spirit be powerful in me to the ſubduing of all evil inclinations. I believe that all things are naked and bare before thee, and therefore that thou canſt not be mock'd or impos'd upon by ſpecious pretences or formalities: That I am not to expect to appear any other in thy Eyes, than ſuch as I am in my ſelf; enable me therefore to confeſs thee in my practice as well as words, to live like one who believed thy holy Truths. Let my heart be fixt in Honeſty and uprightneſs to obey all thy Commandments. Let the belief of things

not seen have the same influence upon me, they had upon all the holy Saints, Martyrs and Confessors, i. e. *perswade me to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and holily in this present World, through Jesus Christ.*

Sect. 2. *Of doing Good.*

There are a sort of People who endeavour all they can to withdraw from the World, and rid their hands of business, and think it abundantly sufficient if they can discharge their *Duty towards God* in their Retirements.

Retirements in what Cases allowable.

This is Lawful, nay commendable, only upon two accounts.

1. If my Temper or Circumstances be such, that my Conservation cannot be *publick* and *safe* too, for then the Salvation of my own Soul is naturally the most near and dear concern; or,

2. If my qualifications are such, that my retirement is likely to prove more advantageous to the publick, than my filling any other Post, for then I act according to the Rules of Charity.

There

There are two other inducements to a Retir'd Private Life, the one founded in a vice, the other in a miſtake.

1. The Firſt is when Men withdraw from the *Buſineſs* as from the *trouble* of the World, and their *Pleaſure*, not *Religion* is their firſt and chief motive. They meet with many rubs and oppoſitions in a buſie active Life, and then they grow ſoft, and weak, and lazy, and they want Courage, and Induſtry; and the frequent interruptions of their private peace and enjoyment is uneaſie, and they would withdraw to enjoy themſelves; and this is unchriſtian and unmanly, 'tis *Epicuriſm*, not *Contempt* of the World.

2. The miſtake is, when we look upon a Monaſtical kind of life as the whole of Chriſtianity, and the meer perfection of the Regenerate ſtate, and place Piety ſo wholly in acts of Solitary Devotion, as to ſeclude the doing good and communicating; And it will behove ſuch to conſider 1. That *true* and *apparent* Motives, *Pretence* and *Religion*, are ſometimes ſo twiſted together, that it is hard for a Man to diſtinguiſh 'em,

and therefore some secret weakness or reserve may be the real, whilst Zeal is made the pretended cause of this choice.

The Active Life in general preferred.

2. That the busie and Active Life is the more *Excellent*, and the more *Necessary*. 1. The more excellent, as being fuller of hazards, and troubles, and temptations; there is a larger field for Virtues, for Patience, Courage, Meekness, Reliance, *&c.* in an active than speculative life, and such will receive more Crowns. And when I consider the Nature of God, and necessities of Mankind, I cannot but think acts of Charity as prevalent to the wiping off our guilt as the severest penances. A vigorous and active life spent in promoting the welfare of others, is a more perfect instance of self-denyal, speaks a greater contradiction to our ease and pleasure, commits more violence upon our inclinations, than any acts of Private Austerity can pretend to do; for besides the pains, the watching and the fasting incident to both alike; the trouble of contrivance, the industry of addresses, the uneasiness of refusals, *&c.* sufficiently weigh down the one side.

Besides,

Beſides, this Confinement impriſons our light under a buſhel; it is a cover, a Napkin for our Talents, to conceal them, and render them uſeleſs to others; and therefore our reward will be leſs in another World, and our graces the fainter in this, *For to him that hath,* i.e. *uſeth, ſhall be given.* Grace, like the Widow's Oil, increaſes, by being charitably imparted: That Flame, which warms my Neighbour, reflects back with a double heat upon my ſelf, and that Goodneſs which cheriſhes *his* heart, ſoftens and ſanctifies my own. And over and above all this, I enjoy a ſtrange delight in doing good, and in beholding the fruits which my own hands have planted. And my aſſurance, and the confidence of my hopes inereaſes by the conſcience of that Love, which my works convince me I have for my Brethren.

2. A buſie employment of our ſelves for the advantage of others, is of more abſolute neceſſity. The world is one intire Body, and each member muſt be ſerviceable in its place, nor can any part withdraw it ſelf from the whole at its pleaſure; hence it is that the greater

ter part of the Law of our bleſſed Saviour are Rules of Society, of Juſtice, Charity, *&c.* and he himſelf, the beſt example, made his Retirements by night, but by day *he went about doing good*; Nature hath founded a cognation amongſt us, as we partake of the ſame form, ſhape, reaſon. But the Chriſtian Religion hath cemented us in cloſer unions, made us members of the ſame Body, tied us together by faith and love, by the ſame Sacraments, the ſame Promiſes, and the ſame Hopes: and therefore we cannot in reaſon think we do one another all the good we are bound to, by a meer abſtinence from doing wrong, and by ſequeſtring our ſelves from the ſervice and concerns of our Brethren.

3. Becauſe the Glory of God is more concern'd in the deportments of whole Societies, than a few private perſons, as much as the ſafety of a multitude is more valuable than that of a very few, and goodneſs redounds more to his honour when publick and almoſt univerſal, than when cloiſtered up in the Boſoms of a few: therefore all good men muſt

muſt needs be obliged to promote the intereſt of Holineſs and Goodneſs in the publick, becauſe the Divine glory is ſo deeply concern'd in it.

4. (Which ought well to be conſider'd) The nature of Goodneſs is ſuch, that it cannot well be conceiv'd how *the being good* is ſeparable from *doing good*. God, tho his own Heaven and Happineſs, did yet found a World, to which he might be an univerſal Benefactor; his good-neſs was certainly the moſt powerful motive to his Creation, not any conſiderable acceſſion that this happineſs was to receive from it. This Goodneſs therefore in Man ought to be a Vigorous and Active Principle, and render 'em the Benefactors of Mankind. It is indeed hardly conceivable, how men ſhould be zealous Patrons of virtue and goodneſs, and yet not concern'd to protect and own them, to promote and encourage 'em in the world; or how men can be inflam'd with a very ſtrong Love of God, and yet not endeavour to eſtabliſh a true ſenſe of his Beauties and Excellencies in the minds of Men; or how, laſtly, any can be poſſeſs'd with a paſſionate

paſſionate kindneſs for a Brother, and yet never mingle with the concerns of his Soul or Body.

Laſtly, The great motives of the Goſpel, the Example of our Lord and Saviour, whoſe Diſciples we profeſs our ſelves, whom we are bound to imitate; *And he went about doing good.* The glorious rewards annex'd to all thoſe who any ways benefit Mankind, either by inſtructing the mind, or relieving the body; the Character of the Children of God at the laſt Judgment compos'd wholly of Acts of Charity, do do all ſuppoſe an active Life. Conformable to this Doctrine is that of *Heb.* 13. 15, 16. *By him therefore let us offer the Sacrifice of Praiſe to God continually, that is the fruit of our Lips, giving thanks to his Name. But to do good and to communicate forget not, for with ſuch ſacrifices God is well pleaſed*; we muſt pray, but prayer without *doing good* is an unpleaſing ſacrifice, without Charity our very devotion is unchriſtian, and our Religion unnatural.

This let thoſe mind, who are long in their Prayers, ſevere in their outward deportment,

deportment, frequent hearers of the word, and yet we can diſcern in them no fruits of Meekneſs or Charity : let 'em conſider whether they do not miſtake the natureof Religion, wheether they donot chuſe the more eaſie Sacrifice,becauſe it coſts them nothing , whether they have not a ſecret reſerve of Covetouſneſs or Frowardneſs, *&c.*

Having ſpoke thus much of the Neceſſity of doing good, and the Motives to it,I'll propoſe three or four Rules, relating to doing good, and ſubmit them to your Conſideration.

1. That we muſt judge of our call to do good by the capacities and fitneſſes with which God hath endow'd us; and here I cannot but proclaim our own glorious priviledge, That tho to do good be ſo great and glorious a thing, that it is a kind of imitation of God himſelf, a thing our bleſſed Saviour came down on earth for, yet it hath pleaſed God ſo to multiply the inſtances and opportunities of Goodneſs, that there is none ſo unfortunate,as to be uncapable of doing good. The happy by their wealth, the wiſe

wiſe by their knowledge; even the miſerable themſelves, may, by their Patience, and Courage, and Prayer, comfort and relieve the World; and we are to judge by our Parts and Fortunes the way that God hath mark'd out for our Charity, and be content to obey him in his own methods.

2. Let Meditation and Prayer adminiſter to our good actions, and like Oil to a Lamp, give our Charity freſh Spirits and Flame; for as private Religion is deficient without publick Charity; ſo Charity, unleſs often refreſhed by Retirement, Devotion, and Heavenly Reflections, will cool and languiſh; our Hearts will be tough and inſenſible, and our doing good will be only the effect of Cuſtom or Prudence, or Activity of Spirit, not of Religion or Charity; and if (which is the beſt can be ſuppos'd) the man conſecrates the whole Maſs of his Actions by purity of intention, and continues an obſtinate obſerver of Prayer, as far as he thinks ſtrict duty obliges him to, yet for want of more leiſurely Meditation, and more ſerious reflexions, his addreſſes will loſe their warmth, his

Soul

Soul will abate much of its love, and whilſt his Religion loſes ſo much of its pleaſure and ſweetneſs, what wonder if his Charity reliſh more of drudgery than delight.

3. That we may not be diſcourag'd from doing Good, by any difficulty or misfortune which may attend us in it in our nightly Reflections, let us judge not the *happineſs of our ſucceſs*, but the *integrity of our endeavour*; and let us think it ſufficient reward, that we have obeyed God; or if we will meaſure our ſucceſs, let us examine how much our experience hath improv'd our Meekneſs, our Patience, our Reliance, our Charity, for ſcarce any Action, but will exerciſe ſome of theſe graces.

4. Look upon doing good as truly your Buſineſs, as Prayer or Hearing the Word, or Meditation, *&c.* And therefore never think your time miſ-ſpent, which is laid out in viſiting the impriſon'd or ſick, relieving the neceſſitous, comforting the afflicted, and reducing thoſe that Err into the Paths of Sobriety and Truth, though this time be par'd off from our Meditations, Prayer and Sacrament. He

is

is a good man indeed, who prefers meek attendance and miniſtry, and importunate addreſſes to the Souls of Men, before much knowledge, paſſionate diſputes and high pretences.

O Charity, how lovely muſt thou needs be in the eye of Heaven? for wert thou planted in all our hearts, Earth would reſemble that place above: I will be pleaſed therefore with my ſelf only in proportion to what I ſhare of thee, for I know this is the Standard by which God now values me, and will hereafter judge me.

If this be the end of Religion, only to implant goodneſs and charity amongſt us, to make us holy and like God, and kind and beneficial one to another, What is it that the World hates it for? I may ſay, concerning thoſe who perſecute Chriſtianity, as St. *Peter* did of thoſe who Crucified its Author? *I wot that through Ignorance ye did it*, Act. 3. 17. Surely it is becauſe you do not diſcern its beauty, that you do not Love it.

If any retired life promote the ends I have mention'd, as well as an Active one,

one, I would not be thought to condemn it.

The Prayer.

O *God, the Heaven and Earth are full of* thy Goodneſs; *the Faculties of our Souls, and the Senſes of our bodies are all employed in the* contemplation, *and* enjoyment *of it*; *O make us who worſhip thee, to* imitate *thee too, that we may be thy Children indeed, make our Souls delight to do good, and imprint in us ſuch tender and compaſſionate Bowels, towards one another, as our dear Lord and Maſter had towards us.* Amen, Amen, *bleſſed Jeſus.*

CHAP. IV.

Of Faith, the habit and objects of it. The Affections it produceth. Of Reliance. The neceſſity of Faith. The ways of obtaining and improving it.

HAving conſider'd the Nature of Chriſtianity in reſpect to practice

in the *general*, I am now to speak of it more *particularly*, but not pretending to give an account of every single vertue, I will dwell upon three or four. Which contain the Substance of the Christian duty, *i. e.* Faith, Love, Temperance and Humility. I will not apologize for the unphilosophical placing of Faith amongst practical duties, the following Discourse will clear the reason of it. I place humility in the last place, not because there is not an humility which is precedent to, and dis-poses men for the Reception of Faith, but because I look upon that humility which is consequent to, and caus'd by it, and which must always accompany it to render it acceptable, in a more peculiar and proper sense an evangelical Grace.

1. *Of Faith.*

When I read the glorious Atchievements of a true Faith, *Heb* 11. *That it subdued Kingdoms, wrought Righteousness, obtained Promises*, &c. and in one word, supported men under the *greatest miseries*, and arm'd them against the most *taking Pleasures* of this World; I cannot sufficiently

ſufficiently wonder, that a fuller and clearer diſcovery of a Heaven, confirm'd to us by the ſtrongeſt evidence, *i. e.* the *demonſtration of the Spirit and of Power*, ſhould have ſo weak an influence upon us Chriſtians. We take no more Pains for Heaven, than if we did not believe there were ſuch a place; and we have the ſame *cares and fears* in reſpect of the things preſent, which Heathens and Infidels have, ſo that though we talk much of Faith we make little or no uſe at all of it.

The Nature of Faith explained.

Therefore leſt any man delude and fool himſelf with a perſwaſion of being endowed with that Faith which he hath not, I'll give ſuch an account of it as agrees with the Goſpel of the Kingdom, as ſuits with, and ſerves the *neceſſities of mankind*, and the *end and aims of God*.

Faith, ſaith the bleſſed Apoſtle, *is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not ſeen*; the ſubſtance or preſence, *the evidence or proof*; 'tis not a ſlight tranſient glance, a drowſie imperfect aſſent, a ſtaggering wavering opinion, but 'tis a lively repreſentation and affective Viſion, a full perſwaſion of the

glorious truths of the Goſpel: when the Objects are ſo fully and clearly evident that they not only *convince*, but *take* us too; it is having the mind enlightned, and ſo looking upon things with the eyes of Angels, and judging by the light of the bleſſed Spirit.

It is not only to ſee that the things inviſible *are*, but to ſee them in ſome meaſure *ſuch* as they are; Eternity as Eternity, and Heaven as Heaven, that is, a ſtate of truly great and glorious happineſs; on this account, the things *preſent* may have a different face and aſpect, when regarded by the eyes of *Faith*, and when of *Senſe*; for Senſe ſtops in the things themſelves, and regards their uſefulneſs to the pleaſure or profit of this preſent life; but Faith carries its ſight forward, and compares the things which are *ſeen*, with thoſe *hoped* for, the things temporal, with thoſe eternal, and then all below appears but meer vanity.

This whole account of Faith we may find in the 13 *verſe* of *Heb.* 11. *Theſe all died in Faith*, (and what it is to die or live *in Faith* the following words explain) *not having received the promiſes*, (*i. e.*

(*i. e.* he accompliſhment of them) *but having ſeen them afar off*, *i. e.* by divine Revelation (*were perſwaded of them, and embraced them*, (and the natural conſequence of this was,) *and confeſſed that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth* : Now Faith is unalterable as to its eſſence, but its objects may vary, they may be more or fewer, clearer or darker, according to the Nature of Divine Revelation, *Heb.* 1. 1. Its evideuce may be fuller or weaker, but ſtill it muſt be ſuch as may ſuffice to convince Man of the divine authority of the Revelation.

The object of the Chriſtian Faith and its influence.

As to the Chriſtian Faith, 2. Its objects are the whole Goſpel of Chriſt. God the Father, ſuch as he revealed by the Son. God the Son incarnate, crucified, *&c.* The Rewards and Puniſhments contained in it ; and all in order to engage us to an entire obedience to its holy and righteous Precepts.

By Faith I ſee that God who is inviſible, who, though he dwells in Heaven, doth yet humble himſelf to behold all that is done upon Earth ; nor doth he only *behold* but *govern* all things too : And whilſt I contemplate his *Wiſdom*,

Power, *Truth*, *Goodneſs*, *Holineſs* and *Juſtice*, manifeſt to me in the Goſpel, I adore and worſhip him, I love and fear him, I call on and rely upon him, I endeavour to walk before him, and be perfect; I know nothing like him, and therefore I deſire nothing beſide him, or equal to him in Heaven or in Earth.

By Faith I ſee the Son of God abandoning the boſom and the Glory of his Father, deſcending upon Earth, and aſſuming the form of a Servant, that by his Doctrine and Example he might propagate Righteouſneſs and Holineſs in the World; I trace him through all the Stages of his Sufferings and Travels, till I behold him faſtn'd to the Croſs, and bleeding out his meek and holy Soul at thoſe painful wounds the Nails had made; and all this for my ſins, and *the ſins of the whole world*; and then with what a ſtrange mixture of Paſſion that ſight fills me! with grief and ſhame, and yet with love and hope too: How I am amaz'd to ſee what *indignation* a holy God hath diſcover'd againſt *Sin*! and how my heart bleeds to think that my ſins

ſins have treated thus deſpitefully and cruelly my dear Lord and Maſter! and with what a melting paſſion, and vigorous reſolutions of a fervent induſtrious ſervice, and an everlaſting zeal and devotion, do I behold the amazing inſtances of my Saviour's Love, whilſt with ſo much affection and ſweetneſs he *laid down his life for me*, whilſt his enemy and his perſecutor! O how I long to do ſomething for ſuch a Saviour as this, to execute my luſts, to bring his and *mine enemies before his Face and ſlay them*! and now though a ſurvey of my ſins hath filled me with amazement and ſhame, yet ſince Chriſt hath died I look up with comfort and an humble hope! *Since he hath died*, did I ſay, *yea, rather ſince he is riſen again*; for,

By Faith I ſee him breaking forth with Power and great Glory out of his Sepulchre; I behold him aſcending in triumph up to Heaven; I ſee with *Stephen* the Heavens open'd, and my Prince and Saviour ſitting at the right hand of Power, with one hand diſpenſing his Graces, with the other holding never-fading Wreaths to Crown the patience of

his Saints: And now how I am exalted above Nature, tranſported above the World and Fleſh! how this proſpect hath diſarm'd the Beauties and Glories of this Life of all their Killing Charms and Temptations! how my Soul leaps for joy to ſee a way open'd into the Holy of Holies! and to conſider the mighty intereſt I have in Heaven!

As for Earth, I am ſo far from admiring it, I value it not; I know I muſt *ſojourn here* a while, and therefore I muſt be fed and *cloathed*, but *my heavenly Father knows I have need of theſe things*, and his is the Earth and the fulneſs thereof, and therefore he cannot want means and ability to provide for me; and he is a wiſe and a good God; and he hath promis'd by his Son to take care of me, and all this will invite him to deſign and accompliſh what is beſt for me: Upon theſe grounds I think I could hope (like *Abraham*) even againſt hope, I could rely upon God without any flattering appearances of Promiſes, Friends, nay, or any viſible probabilities; I am *to ſeek the righteouſneſs* of the Kingdom, and permit the Government of the World to the

the God of it; I am his Child and *he* is my Heavenly Father; *to obey is my* Duty, and (with Reverence be it ſaid) to *provide* for me is his.

By this time it is eaſie to be diſcern'd what kind of Faith it is muſt ſave or juſtifie us; "One that enlightens our Underſtanding, and raviſheth our Heart; "one that prays and watches, that contends and ſtruggles, and fights and conquers; one that makes us too great for "Earth, and fit for Heaven; one that "fears, and loves, and worſhips, and ſeeks, "and relies, and hopes; And then,

3. When it hath done this, when I find my Faith made perfect in Love, when through this belief I find my ſelf a Conquerour over the World and Fleſh, and have crucified thoſe Luſts I did before ſerve and gratifie, then I am full of Joy and Peace; then I feel that pledge of his Love, that Spirit which he hath given me, aſſuring me of the pardon of my ſins through the bloud of Chriſt. Then I have a foretaſte of the Powers of the World to come, and I do in ſome meaſure anticipate my Heaven; and not till then. *Joy and Peace the fruit of the true Faith.*

For

For this perſwaſion of the Pardon of my ſins (call it what you pleaſe, Faith, Peace, Hope, Aſſurance) is always proportionable to the ſucceſs I have in my *fight of faith*; if I have either falſly betrayed, or weakly deſerted a good cauſe, *i. e.* my virtue under a temptation, which is in Scripture call'd a Tryal; if I have turn'd my back in the day of Battel; then my own Conſcience condemns me, and becauſe I know that *God is greater than my Conſcience, and knoweth all things*, therefore I cannot expect to ſtand when I am judged, unleſs I rally and repair my fault: but if upon a ſerious reflection upon my Life each evening, my Conſcience acquit me as a Conquerour through Faith and Love, then *I rejoyce with joy unſpeakable and full of glory*: What a beautiful morning doth this Faith ſhed upon my Soul! How I long that thy Kingdom, O God, may come! And how I diſdain all that this vain World can flatter me with! Then like *Peter, though all men ſhould be offended* (fall through temptation) *yet will not I.* Give me a temptation equal to this Faith, till the ſence of my frailty, as in

in *Peter*, do *lowre* my Confidence and yet *heighten* my Reſolutions.

And yet all this doth not in the leaſt imply any reliance or confidence in my *own Righteouſneſs* or *Works* (phraſes of the ſame ſenſe in Scripture,) but that I know Repentance and Faith are propos'd as the ſole Conditions of Juſtification through the bloud of Chriſt. And that theſe fruits or effects of Righteouſneſs (I mean a holy life) are the only evidence of theſe habits; and therefore I can never perſwade my ſelf that I *believe* and *repent*, till I *live well*; nor ever flatter my ſelf with Peace, Peace *through his bloud*, till I thus *believe* and *repent*; to do otherwiſe is preſumption not Faith; 'tis the fond and groundleſs confidence of fooliſh Virgins, which ſhall be for ever ſhut out from the Bridegroom's preſence.

There is not in the Book of God any one plainer Doctrine than this, *Not every one that ſayeth unto me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven*: which is not every one that profeſſes me to be Lord, and ſo far

far relies upon me as to knock at the Gates of Heaven with preſumption of admiſſion, ſhall enter into Heaven, but he only whoſe aſſurance ſprings from the Conſcience of an humble, ſincere and univerſal Obedience. *If we walk in the light as he (God) is in the light, we have fellowſhip one with another (and truly our fellowſhip is with the Father and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt,* v 3.) *and the bloud of Jeſus Chriſt his Son cleanſeth us from all ſin.* Where, walking in the light (that is Holineſs) is ſuppos'd as a neceſſary condition to our Purification by the bloud of Chriſt; and, *Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not aſhamed.* Theſe are the ſteps or ſtages by which the Chriſtian maketh his progreſs into aſſurance, Tribulation being conquer'd worketh Patience, and Patience Experience, *i. e.* a conviction or Proof of our Love of God, and this Experience worketh hope, which contains in it the aſſurance of Pardon, and the expectance of a better World; and by the ſame method doth he who is attacked by the

the temptations of pleaſures proceed to a particular aſſurance.

The ſum of all is this; man may be conſider'd in three ſtates, 1. *Of Unregeneration*, and then he is to be convinc'd of the truth of the Goſpel; if that be ſuppos'd done already, this belief will eaſily convince him of his unrighteouſneſs, and ſhew him the wrath of God reveal'd from Heaven againſt all ungodly and impenitent ſinners: And on the other hand, the bloud of Chriſt (who became a propitiation for the ſins of the World) will encourage him to hope for Reconciliation and Pardon, if he repent and rely upon Chriſt; and it will highly oblige him to both. Or, 2. In a *ſtate of Regeneration*, and then according to that experience and proof a man hath of the truth and ſincerity of his Converſion, ſuch is the proportion and degree of his aſſurance and hopes; which doth not exclude, but ſuppoſe Faith in Chriſt; for this is no more than to believe, that now his ſins are pardon'd, his prayers heard, his ſervices accepted, and he ſhall at laſt be rewarded, (if he perſevere unto the end) in and through Chriſt. Or, 3. in a ſtate of

The different uſe of Faith in different ſtates.

of *Relapſe*; and even here, he hath yet hopes, (if he repent) through the blood of Chriſt. For this is frequently aſſerted in Scripture. I'll urge but one place, 1 *Joh.* 2. 1, 2. *My little Children,* (regenerate certainly) *theſe things write I unto you, that ye ſin not; and if any man ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous, and he is the propitiation for our ſins,* that by theſe ſins are not uuderſtood the *unavoidable frailties and imperfections* of the beſt men, but plain and manifeſt tranſgreſſions of the Law, is plain, 1. From hence, That this is the general notion of ſin in this Epiſtle. 2. From the manner of ſpeaking, *that ye ſin not; If any man ſin:* which cannot be ſenſe if applied to the unavoidable errors and imperfections of the beſt of men. 3. They are here ſaid to be of the number of thoſe ſins for which Chriſt ſhed his bloud, and are equall'd with the ſins of the reſt of the World.

And beſides theſe three uſes of Faith I know none: Nor what more can be attributed to, or deſired from the bloud of Chriſt, I cannot ſee; unleſs men will wilfully

wilfully abuſe their Faith into an impunity and patronage for ſin, or what diſparagement it can reflect upon this Sacrifice of Chriſt, that it obligeth us to Holineſs, and reſcues us from the power as well as guilt of ſin, I am not able to comprehend; as to the ſilly ſcandal *of truſting in Works*, they that know what theſe words or terms (*Juſtified by Works, and juſtified by Repentance and Faith*) mean, know that the one implies a perfect contradiction to the other, for the former denies any ſin or iniquity, and the latter doth directly ſuppoſe it.

4. "Without *ſome degrees* of Faith, it "is impoſſible that a *wicked* man ſhould "be awaken'd into any ſerious ſence of "this condition, or ſhould be induc'd to ſet "himſelf in good earneſt to pleaſe and o- "bey God; withou ta *good meaſure* of "this Faith, the very *Regenerate* will never "be able to conquer the World, and "ſubdue the Fleſh, and enter into their "reſt, I mean with the Apoſtle *a reſt* "*from ſin*, for their *endeavours* will be "but weak and languiſhing; their *pray-* "*ers* cold and faint; the *acts and Inſtan-* "*ces* *The Neceſſity of Faith.*

" *ces* of Religion will be undertaken as
" a Duty of *neceſſity*, not *delight*; the
" whole *progreſs* of their Chriſtian war-
" fare, will, like the driving of *Phara-*
" *oh*'s Chariots when the Wheels were off,
" be ſlow and uneaſie; they will be lia-
" ble to *frequent relapſes*; their *Life* will
" not be a firm Peace, but an *unſteady*
" *truce* with Conſcience: And their *Death*
" will be mixt and checker'd with jea-
" louſies, diſtruſts and faint hopes, like
" a Sky ſpotted with numerous Clouds.

" But if we arrive at a good degree of
" this precious Faith we ſhall be more
" than Conquerors o'er the *World* and
" *our ſelves*; we ſhall be plac'd above the
" reach of Temptations, preſerv'd tho-
" rough the power of Faith unto Salva-
" tion: we ſhall be too great to be ſwoln
" with vanity in *proſperity*, or to be caſt
" down in *affliction*; we ſhall find all the
" ways of wiſdom ways of pleaſantneſs,
" and all her paths peace: In one word,
" we ſhall rejoyce always with joy un-
" ſpeakable, and full of glory, and when
" our glaſs is run, and our lives ſpent,
" we ſhall be tranſlated to the bleſſed
" Seats of Perfection and Peace.

5. For

5. For the obtaining, and improving, and confirming of this holy Faith, it is neceſſary, that our Religion be not meer Credulity or Cuſtom, but that we ſeriouſly weigh thoſe two great Witneſſes our Saviour appeals to for the proof of his coming from God, his *Works* and *Doctrine*; the Power of the one, and *Holineſs* of the other, being ſufficient evidences of his Commiſſion from above: To which we muſt add the *Teſtimonies* God himſelf gave him from Heaven, his *Reſurrection* from the Dead and *Aſcenſion* into Glory; and all thoſe *mighty works* perform'd by his *followers* in the virtue of Faith in his Name; and to be firmly rooted and grounded in Faith through theſe arguments, is that which *S. Peter* exhorts Chriſtians to, 1 *Pet.* 3.15. *Be ready always to give an anſwer to every man that asks you a reaſon of the hope that is in you.* *Means of obtaining, preſerving and increaſing Faith.*

2. By frequent Retirements and ſolemn and devout Meditations to acquaint our ſelves as intimately as we can with the glorious Truths of the Goſpel of Chriſt, to draw the repreſentations of them as lively as may be, and

to dwell and gaze on the things we believe, till the light of the underſtanding hath ſhed it ſelf through the Inferior Soul, warmed all our Paſſions, and the *Body* itſelf ſeem to reliſh and partake of the *Pleaſures* of the *Mind*.

The moſt uſeful matter of our Meditations will be, 1. The nature of the God we worſhip, I mean the glorious Attributes Mankind is moſt concerned in, his Truth and Wiſdom, his Power and his Goodneſs: And, 2. The *Sufferings* and the *Glory* of our bleſſed Redeemer, as the ſole ground of inexpreſſible Comfort; as the moſt endearing obligation to Holineſs; as the moſt perfect pattern of Virtue, and the moſt lively inſtance of its Reward.

3. We muſt add to both theſe means inceſſant Prayers offered up with a fervent Spirit at the Throne of Grace, for conſidering the darkneſs and indiſpoſition of our Natures, we have altogether need of the aſſiſtances of the divine Spirit, and therefore

The

The Prayer.

O Eternal God, the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Author of all good gifts, enlighten my underſtanding, that I may believe thy Goſpel; ſet at liberty my will, that I may approve and love the things that are excellent; that the belief of the Goſpel of the Bleſſed Jeſus may engage me to Love, Obey, *and* Rely *upon him; give me ſuch a lively ſight, and firm belief of the things not ſeen, as may raiſe me above all the corruptions which are in the World through Luſt, and make me partaker of the Divine Nature, that ſo my Life may be full of* Joy, *my latter end of* Peace, *my Soul in its Separation of Reſt, and my whole man in the Reſurrection full of* Delight *and* Glory. *Amen, Amen, Bleſſed Jeſus.*

CHAP. V.

Of our Love of God. It is not meerly an honourable Opinion of him, but a Paſſion or Affection. Love not equally ſenſible in all, and why. Of Spiritual diſſertion, its properties, and remedies. The effects of Love. The Motives to it.

CHarity or Love may relate either to God or our Neighbour. I will here treat of the Nature, Properties, and Motives of our Love of God.

The nature of Love in general. Love is not a meer *Approbation* of the underſtanding, but alſo an *affection* of the Will, (or Heart, in Scripture-phraſe.) And therefore *Coldneſs* and *Indifference* in Religion, and *warmth*, and paſſion for the World, cannot be juſtified by bearing our ſelves in hand, that we do nevertheleſs *Love* God, becauſe we do *prefer* him in our thoughts above all things, and becauſe we will not do what will *diſpleaſe* him; for the former of theſe may be an unavoidable conſequence of a clear underſtanding, and the latter of an innate *Self-love*, which may be

be able to reſtrain us from the Commiſſion of thoſe ſins, which we believe will do us an unſpeakable miſchief.

Theſe do well in their place, and are preſuppoſed to the Love of God, for no man can love God unleſs he *know* him; nor will any man make any diſtinction of *Good* and *Evil* (*i. e.* lovely or hateful by conſequence) unleſs he love himſelf; but yet theſe are apparently diſtinguiſhable from, and can ſtand ſeparately and alone without the love of God; and therefore let none deceive themſelves, for *To love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our ſoul, and with all our ſtrength, and with all our mind*, is ſomething more, than to entertain an honorable *opinion* of him, or to avoid affronting him, becauſe he is able to puniſh us; the Scripture expreſſes this love by *Delight* and *Joy*, by *Deſire* and *Longing*, *Hungring*, *Thirſting*, *Seeking*, and the like; and more fully; If we love God above all things, our hearts will be where our Treaſure is; our affections will be faſtned on things above; and our Converſation will be in Heaven, becauſe our God is there.

The Properties of the Love of God.

Now we cannot converſe with Heaven but by *Faith* and *Hope*, *Meditation* and *Prayer*. And therefore it muſt follow, that they who love God muſt be induſtrious to improve theſe Graces, and be frequent in the exerciſe of theſe Duties, as the *Means* and *Inſtruments* of enjoyment: And,

2. If we love God we ſhall hunger, and thirſt after Righteouſneſs and Holineſs, which beautifie the Soul, and render us like God, and therefore amiable in his eyes; and we ſhall delight in all thoſe good and vertuous actions, which are the proofs of an inflam'd affection, and indear us to God, *he that loves him keeps his Commandments*: and we ſhall hate nothing ſo mortally as ſin, becauſe it ſtains, and ſullies the beauty of our Souls, diſtaſtes the God we love, and interrupts our peace and joy, and extinguiſhes our hopes? and, if this be the frame and habit of our Souls towards God, then becauſe we cannot love or ſerve two ſuch contrary Maſters, as God and the World, therefore,

3. Theſe temporal things which are ſeen will appear very cheap and inconſiderable

ſiderable to us, and our concern for them will be ſo cold and indifferent, that no change which betides them, no imaginary excellency that is in them, will be able to raiſe our Paſſions, to diſtract our thoughts, to abate our diligence, to divide our affections, and overthrow our Faith; for the love of God, the proſpect of a more glorious life will have diſarm'd the Glory, Beauty, and Wealth of this World of all their Charm and Temptation; and if ſo, how can we then be led captive by what we do not in the leaſt admire? How can we be afflicted at the loſs of what we do not value? or Why can we not be calmly divided from what our affections have renounc'd already?

Vain World, adieu! I am above either thy *Menaces* or *Flatteries*: I fear nothing becauſe I am at peace with the God I Love; and *I deſpiſe* the gilded dreams, becauſe the Love of my God ſwallows up all my deſires, and I am content to have no portion but him alone: How my Heart pants after thy Courts, O God, the Holy of Holies, the Heaven of Heavens, where I ſhall for

ever behold thy face, and Reign in the Kingdom of my bleſſed Saviour for ever and ever! Now with St. *Paul*, *I long to be ſet at liberty, to be diſſolved from this body, and to be with Chriſt*, nor ſhould I willingly ſtay longer here on Earth, but in *Obedience* to thy holy Will, and deſign of ſpending this life in *doing Service* to thy glory, and in expreſſions of my love, in *Longings*, and *Watchings*, and *Sufferings*. And when I conſider *this*, methinks my Life's too ſhort, and I ſhall go to Heaven too ſoon, and I could wiſh my Snu would ſtand ſtill a little, that I might *do* and *ſuffer* ſomething for my Lord before I go to enter into his joy, and to receive a Crown.

It is true, theſe are heights of Love, which all do not, though it were to be wiſhed all could attain to, for we have need of ſanctified paſſions to enable us to do our Duty with delight and vigour: But none are from the want of ſuch degrees *of Ardour*, to conclude themſelves, either wholly void of the love of God, or deſerted by him; for God is a Being infinitely above our Conceptions, and

that

that of him, which we do conceive, as *Power*, *Wiſdom*, and *Goodneſs*, though amiable, yet are Spiritual, and not the objects of ſenſe, and therefore do not move us with the ſame violence that ſenſible things do, whence it is eaſie to conclude, that our love of God is of a different nature from *that* we pay the creature, 'tis a more Spiritual affection mixt with Adoration, 'tis an awful deſire of pleaſing and enjoying him, not always terminating in ſo vehement and *ſenſible* a paſſion as viſible objects beget in us; and therefore the ſafeſt way is to judge of our ſtate not by *tranſports*, but by the *firmneſs of* our *Reſolutions*; and by the *conſtancy* and *cheerfulneſs* of our *Obedience*.

But becauſe as there is a more peculiar preſence of God (as I humbly conceive evident by Scripture) ſo by conſequence there may be a withdrawing and retirement of that preſence: therefore when I find my underſtanding dim and clouded, or diſtracted and ſhaken with ſuggeſtions to unbelief, my deſires lukewarm and groveling, my Devotion faint and drowſie, and my communion without

without guſt and reliſh, I am weary of my ſelf, and I have no reſt by reaſon of thy abſence, O bleſſed Lord. Then firſt I lay before me my Life, and review my actions, which are late and freſh in memory, and examine what it is hath diſpleaſed my God, and if I find the accurſed thing that drove away a holy God, I caſt my ſelf down before him and abhor and renounce it: But Secondly, if ſin do not appear to me to be the cauſe of this indiſpoſition and liſtleſneſs, then perhaps I have not been as watchful and induſtrious to improve my Graces as I ſhould; or if this be not it, perhaps 'tis but an *alteration in my body* that clogs and benights this Soul, and then I groan at the miſeries of my Pilgrimage, and bemoan the Infelicities of my Nature; but if none of theſe appear the cauſe, Then Thirdly, I reſt humbly patient, waiting till God pleaſe to return to his reſting place: It were Pride and Sawcineſs in me to expect my Heaven here; to be impatient unleſs I live always in ecſtaſies caus'd by the Divine Preſence: I will meekly ſet my ſelf to my duty, and ſubmit to his bleſſed Will,

Will, whether he think fit to Crown my Cup with over-flowing joy, and to reward my labour by inward tranſports or not.

Motives to Love God.

And is it not fit I ſhould thus love my God, whatever there be which can take and indear a rational and excellent Spirit is to be found in him: all the notions I can poſſibly frame to my ſelf of *ſpiritual perfection and Beauty*, I conceive united in him; Goodneſs, Wiſdom, Power, Truth, Conſtancy, are the Characters by which the Goſpel diſcovers him to us, and theſe have unſpeakable charms upon all ingenious minds, and they are intelligible enough to any that will conſider them; it is true he is a Spirit, and ſo, incomprehenſible to us in his eſſence, and therefore I cannot frame to my ſelf an Image for my Love as one friend doth of another, but the time will come when I ſhall be Spiritual enough to ſee him as I am ſeen, and then my delight and love will be proportionable in ſome meaſure to his beauty and perfection; in the mean time, my Reaſon as well as the Goſpel aſſures me, that he is infinitely amiable, though

though that beauty be now a *Light that is inacceſſible.*

But beſides this, that great character of *Love and Mercy*, (manifeſt in its moſt excellent luſtre in the Goſpel) is enough to endear him to us; He is not now our Father only upon the account of Creation and Providence, becauſe he hath made us, fed and cloathed us, theſe are common and trivial mercies compar'd to the Obligations of the Goſpel, *i. e.* the Redeeming us from our evil converſation by the Bloud of Chriſt, and the power of his ſpirit, into that holineſs, which is his own image and reſemblance: The deſigning us for the joys and pleaſures of his own Heaven; his readineſs to pardon our tranſgreſſions; his care employed upon us againſt temptations, his delight in us, *&c.* If the World could ſhew us ſuch evidences of Love, or could aſſure us of ſuch an Eternity, if it could tell us, as the Serpent did *Eve, eat and ye ſhall be as God*: then indeed there were temptation in it; but till it does there's none really.

Beſides theſe two conſiderations, of the amiableneſs of the divine nature in *himſelf,*

himſelf, and his *goodneſs to us* including his infinite power too, there is but one thing more, which can be a proper motive to engage our affections; that is, that ſuch an object be *laſting*, and this is the great prerogative of God alone, that he never changes nor dies, he will for *ever* be what he is *now*, *moſt perfect*, *and moſt gracious*.

The Prayer.

O *Glorious God, it is the ſole excellence of my Nature, that I am capable of loving thee; and it is my glorious privilege, that thou art pleas'd to ſuffer and admit of the addreſſes of my Soul; in this only I am a-kin to Angels. In thoſe talents which ſerve only to the end of a corporal life, I am out-done by Brutes: O therefore give me grace to dwell as often as I can in the divine contemplations of thy nature, to look forward to that glory which thy bounty hath revealed and promiſed me; to conſider by what methods of infinite Love thou doſt prepare me for it; and let all this make me love thee above all things, and deſire to know nothing but*

Thee

Thee my Heavenly Father, and Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified, Amen, Amen.

CHAP. VI.

The Love of our Neighbour deſcribed. Charity conſiſts in beneficence or forgiveneſs. Of beneficence in relation, 1. to our Neighbours reputation, its its Nature and motives. 2. To his Body, its Nature and motives. The excuſes of Uncharitableneſs in this kind refuted. 3. To the Soul, its Nature and motives. §. 2. Of forgiveneſs, its Nature and motives. The Cure of Paſſion and Revengefulneſs. The Goſpel motives to Charity in general. Inferences from the whole.

THE Second part of Charity is the *Love of our Neighbour*, of which now.

The Standard of our Love of our Neighbour;

Charity is in ſhort, the Love of our Brethren, or a kind of Brotherly affection one towards another; the Rule and Standard by which we are to examine and regulate this Habit, is that love we bear *Our ſelves*, or *that* which *Chriſt* bore

bore us, that is, that it be *unfeigned*, *conſtant*, and out of no other *deſign*, but their happineſs.

The Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 13. taking Charity in a moſt comprehenſive ſenſe, as it animates all other graces, and influences all our actions, which relate to our Neighbour, doth thus divinely deſcribe it. *Charity ſuffereth long and is kind: Charity envieth not, Charity vaunteth not itſelf, is not puffed up, doth not behave it ſelf unſeemly, ſeeketh not her own, is not eaſily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoyceth not in iniquity* (or wrong,) *but rejoyceth in the truth* (faithfulneſs or fair dealing,) *beareth all things*, (or rather covereth or concealeth, *i. e.* others Errour,) *believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

But now to reduce all to fewer heads, and to conſider Charity in a cloſer ſenſe, it contains two things: 1. *The doing good to, and* 2. *Forgiving one another.* 1. *Doing good.* The things which are capable of receiving any benefit by our Charity, are our Neighbours Reputation, Body, Soul; and therefore,

1. Charity

Charity for our Neighbour's Reputation.

1. Charity secures Mans credit, by denouncing a Hell to the *Slanderer*, and *Whisperer*, and *Evil-speaker*. This Charity obligeth us not to give way to weak surmises, but to be forward to believe the best, in favour and excuse of an Errour, not to proclaim anothers faults, though true and real, unless the discovery may serve a better end than the concealment; which is, *that thinketh no evil, beareth all things, believeth all things*, in the Apostle; and if it forbid these sins, much more those blacker of open Slanders and private Whispers.

Nor doth this Charity oblige us only not to wrong our neighbours credit, but as far as we can, not to *suffer* it to be wrong'd; to protect and generously rescue their Reputations from the jaws of the Persecutor, to awe and check the Slanderer by the Majesty of an Holy Anger, into Shame and Confusion; for otherwise we become accessary to those slanders we entertain and give ear to.

If we consider, that to blast a man's Reputation, is to render him the *Scorn* and

and *Hate* of others, and a *Burthen* to himſelf, it cannot be that we ſhould be willing to heap ſuch killing miſchiefs upon the Head of one we *Love*, and Charity is ſuppos'd to love *all*.

Of Charity towards our Neighbours Body.

2. Charity miniſters to the body of our Neighbour; if we will act like men poſſeſs'd by that Charity which ſuits with the Spirit of the Goſpel, our *Hearts* and *Hands* muſt be always open to our Brother's neceſſities, our Souls muſt delight to do good and to be kind; And if we are not able to redreſs their grievances, or relieve their preſſures by our wealth or intereſt, we muſt eaſe them by our compaſſion, comfort them by holy advice, and ſuccour them by our Prayers.

The common pretences for neglecting our Neighbours Relief examined.

All that profeſs Chriſtianity, believe this a Duty, and yet how great and numerous are the ſufferings of the needy and diſtreſſed, and more great and numerous are the luxuries, and the wantonneſſes of the Rich; but it happens thus; all acknowledge the duty, but ſhift it off by two pretences. 1. *Their own inability.* 2. *The Demerit, or unworthineſs of the needy perſon.*

In anſwer to the firſt pretence, it muſt be confeſs'd; that it is not only *Lawful*, but *our duty* to make proviſion, firſt, for our ſelves and thoſe who are more nearly related to us; but then, 1. The meaſure of this proviſion muſt be our *neceſſities*, not wantonneſs; for, if we refuſe relief to the poor on this pretence that we cannot ſupport our vanity, and gaity, and their poverty together, undoubtedly we ſhall periſh under the guilt of *uncharitableneſs*. 2. The preſent time, not the vain fears of the future, muſt determine this neceſſity, for if we deny an alms out of our preſent plenty upon an idle fear of future want, it is ſo far from being a juſt excuſe, that it is a double Crime, *diſtruſt* in God, as well as *hard-heartedneſs* to our Brother, contradictory to *Faith* as well as *Charity*.

I will anſwer to the ſecond pretence by degrees: and therefore, 1. Suppoſe the worth or worthleſneſs, or what's more, unworthineſs of the diſtreſs'd perſon be only *doubtful and ſuſpected*, then certainly it is not agreeable to Charity, to give up a Brother to ruin, upon a vain

vain ſurmiſe; we are not to diſpute their *deſerts*, but to regard their *wants*; I'm ſure this is the *ſafeſt* ſide; Charity may be *miſtaken*, but ſhall never be *unrewarded*: we are herein (I think) to imitate that Wiſdom and Goodneſs which diſpences the Alms of our Heavenly Father; he hath, no doubt on't, particular favours, as well as a particular kindneſs for the good and holy, but as he is the God of all, ſo thoſe his benefits, which all ſtand in abſolute need of, are common to all: But, 2. Suppoſe the diſtreſs'd perſon be really as *Evil*, as *Needy*; unleſs I am ſure that my Charity will feed his vices; I cannot tell, though God hath pleas'd to paſs a Sentence of affliction upon him, whether he hath appointed me to be the Executioner of it, by withholding that aid which may reprieve his Life; how know I but that in thoſe moments I lend him, he may return to himſelf and to his God; nay, more, whether my charity may not be a motive to reduce him, and happy I, if I may ſo cheaply beſtow a double life of Body and of Soul, if I may ſo eaſily retrieve a Soul my Saviour died for, and

whilſt I give an Alms, in ſome ſenſe, beſtow a Heaven too.

But if thoſe I relieve ſhould be the Children of my Father, the fellow heirs of Salvation, How happy an opportunity is put into my hands of obliging thoſe who are ſo dear to Heaven, whoſe intereſt is ſo powerful with the God I worſhip! Yet,

Laſtly, In general, whatever the occaſion be, whatever the perſons, bleſt be the hour wherein I have an opportunity to evidence my *Love to God*, and to part with ſomething for the *ſake* of my dear *Saviour*! Bleſt be the hour, wherein I can lay out, the very ſuperfluities of my trifling ſtock, for a Manſion in Heaven, for an abode in everlaſting bliſs; wherein I can honeſtly buy the Prayers of the poor, *i. e.* it may be the interceſſion of the bleſſed Spirit for me, however, they are prayers which are very ſeldom inſignificant, for if God hears when they *curſe* in bitterneſs of Spirit, (when certainly 'tis his goodneſs, not their piety, which makes their Prayers heard,) how much more ſhall his goodneſs invite him to hear, when they *bleſs*, in the chearfulneſs,

neſs, and refreſhment of their Soul. Laſtly, how comfortable will my reflexions on my Charity be at the hour of Death, and in the day of Judgment, for (be it with an humble reverence ſpoken, tho in imitation of my Saviour) how will *that Jeſus, whom I have fed, when hungry, cloathed when naked, viſited and comforted when ſick and impriſoned,* ever give me up to an Eternity of flames!

3. But yet this is not the whole of the object of our Charity; there are whoſe *Souls* are poor, diſeaſed, and diſtreſſed, as well as Bodies; And can an ulcer'd Leg, or wither'd Arm, deſerve my pity more than a leprous ſoul? Can I chuſe but melt and ſoften at a ſight which ſpeaks a *preſent*, and boads a *future miſery*? Is the eternal welfare of my Brother grown ſo contemptible in my ſight, that I'll not ſpend an hour or word to inſure it? Alas, how then dwells the ſame ſpirit in me which was in Chriſt Jeſus! *Of Charity for his Soul.*

Well then, I will go and viſit ſick Souls, I will preſcribe and preſs, and watch and court, and if I ſee them profligate beyond the hopes of recovery,

I'll recommend them, as I do departing friends, in Prayers and Tears to God; and whatever the ſucceſs prove to *them*, it will be kind and favourable *to me*, Angels will offer up the incenſe of my Prayers, and bottle up my Tears as well as thoſe ſpent on my own ſins; and my God will multiply and increaſe my Talents, when he ſees that I ſpend them well; and the World will love me, and the very wicked will praiſe and juſtifie my God, for theſe effects of his good Spirit.

f forgiving juries, the cond part of harity.

Sect. 2. But nature it ſelf ſeems to incline us to theſe Acts of Charity, as far as they concern the *Relief* of the neceſſitous, the *comfort* of the afflicted, and *Miniſtry* to ſouls; nor can we ſhare in *humanity*, but that we muſt partake of ſome degrees of, and aptneſſes to Chriſtianity: the moſt difficult part of Charity is ſtill behind, *i. e.* the *forgiving injuries*, or more, the *returning good for evil*, and yet if we will be the followers of our bleſſed Saviour, the Children of onr Heaveniy Father, this is it that we muſt labour after, that our Souls may be ſo exalted and heavenly, ſo good and holy

holy, that they may not be eaſily ruffled into peeviſhneſs and frowardneſs, much leſs rankle into a ſettled malice, and a reſolved revenge, but that they may be all calm and ſmoothneſs, all love and ſweetneſs.

Then indeed we may think our ſelves the Children of God, when we can look upon injuries done us with the *mildneſs*, which ariſes from a ſenſe of our own *frailties*; with a *meekneſs*, which is grounded upon our own *worthleſsneſs*, with a *compoſedneſs* of mind, which remits all to an Almighty and wiſe God; and with a *compaſſion* which the *conſideration* of their folly, and ſin doth awaken in us: when we can have the Charity to believe a juſt cauſe of mens actions *conceal'd*, though we can diſcover none: or if the malice be as plain and evident as the wrong, then if we can pray for thoſe who curſe us, honour and love thoſe who treat us with deſpight and ſcorn, if we can ſupport the intereſt, and buoy up the reputation of thoſe who have us'd us ſhamefully and ungratefully, after we have lov'd, and after we have ſerv'd them; if we can do

this, then indeed the Spirit of the Goſpel, a Spirit of Peace and Love abides in us.

tives to giveneſs.

And that I may arrive at this perfection, I reaſon thus with my ſelf.

"'Tis true he hath wronged me, but "unleſs it were for conquering wrongs, "What need have I of Chriſtian pati- "ence! Where is the meekneſs of the "Chriſtian ſpirit, if I am hurried away by "the ſame paſſion with an Heathen and "Infidel! I look for my reward from "God, not Man, and therefore I am not "at all concerned, that he doth not re- "quite my kindneſs by gratitude in his "behaviour. I am the diſciple of Chriſt, "who laid down his life for his enemies, "and the Child of that God, who is kind "even to Rebels and Sinners and why "ſhould I think it enough to divide my "kindneſſes only amongſt my friends? I "am preſs'd by the conſcience of a duty, "and I do not ſo much mind an injury, "as in what manner I am obliged to re- "ceive it, leſt I tranſgreſs as much by *im- "patience*, as mine enemy hath done by "*injuſtice*. I love my own peace and reſt, "and would not be diſordered, and breed

"a

" a ſtorm and tempeſt in my boſom:
" For why ſhould I be ſo fooliſh, as to
" transform another mans *ſin* into my
" *puniſhment?* And laſtly, I am now up-
" on my journey, and am haſtening to-
" ward my Heaven, and I would not be
" ſtopped and detained in my way, much
" leſs turned out of it, by the ſillineſs
" and impertinence of a trifling ſinner.

And beſides all this, I conſider, that theſe men who wrong me, though thus unkind and unjuſt, they are yet my Brethren, the workmanſhip of my Fathers hands, the purchaſe of my dear Lord and Maſters blood, partakers of the ſame promiſe, and Salvation, (unleſs they receive the Grace of God in vain,) and how can I do any thing to them but pray for them, and bleſs them?

Yet after all, being ſtill but mortal, but fleſh and blood, ſome little aptneſſes to impatience and revenge may remain in me, and therefore if at any time my Blood begin to *Chafe*, my Choler boil, my Spirits chill with envy, or mutiny with deſpite, I retire from the provoking object to my God, and am not at reſt till I have laid the evil ſpirit, till I have *Remedies of Anger.*

have ſtifled the ſin in its firſt throes aud pangs; I bemoan my unhappy nature, and bluſh at my own weakneſſes, and *ſtrive*, and *meditate*, and *read*, and *pray*, till my Tears refreſh me, and my repentance eaſe me; and upon this ſometimes I find an extraordinary calm and lightſomeneſs enſue, ſuch as I fancy that of the demoniack, when the ill ſpirit was caſt out, or of one ſuddenly cured of a diſeaſe by the Almightineſs of our Saviour's word; ſometimes I continue a little heavy and oppreſs'd, as when the ill Spirit went out, yet ſo as to rend the man, and then (not leaving off but in ejaculations repeating my inſtances to God,) I betake my ſelf to ſomething which may divert my thoughts, and deceive my pain.

Secondly, In the ſurvey of my daily Deportment, which I make each night, I drag forth the Crime into the awful preſence of an holy God! and there arraigning it of all the *miſchiefs* it hath done me, of all the *troubles* it hath given me, and laying before my ſelf ſeriouſly and devoutly all the obligations I have to the practice of the contrary ver-

tue,

tue, I condemn it, with an holy indignation, I cover myſelf with ſhame and ſorrow, and renew moſt ſolemn reſolutions againſt it, and earneſtly beg of God his aſſiſtance againſt his and mine enemy.

This is a method which will undoubtedly lead us to a moſt certain conqueſt, for it doth naturally tend to *ſoften and calm* the mind, to poſſeſs it with greater degrees of *meekneſs*, and deeper *averſions* for cauſeleſs wrath, and it ſets the Soul upon its *Watch and Guard*, ſo that it cannot be frequently ſurprized into paſſion; and laſtly, it engages the *Divine Spirit* in the quarrel, which ſure is no impotent aſſiſtance.

And therefore I cannot for my life reconcile this deport ment each night, with a repeated frowardneſs and peeviſhneſs each day, much leſs with anger digeſted into a ſullen hatred; ſuch (I am afraid) do not *ſtrive*, and therefore they do not *conquer*; they neglect the means God preſcribes them, and therefore he doth not vouchſafe to relieve them; either they do not at all examine and repent in the preſence of God; or elſe they do it tranſiently

tranſiently and perfunctorily; or, elſe they *Love* the ſin, and therefore *conceal* and *ſhelter* it; or elſe, they are *fond* and *partial* to themſelves, and therefore *cover* and *excuſe it*; and any of theſe faults is enough to undo them.

Motives to Charity in general.

Having taken this ſurvey of Charity, it is now time in the laſt place to conſider by what powerful motives the Goſpel obliges us to this duty.

1. The firſt may be taken from the *nature of Charity* it ſelf. It is remarkable, that St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 13. deſigning to prove the excellence of Charity above any other ſpiritual gifts, thought it enough to deſcribe it; for no body can know what it is, and not preſently diſcern how uſeful and ſerviceable it is, to the happineſs of mankind; the pleaſures of the *Rich*, and comforts of the *Poor*; the ſafety of *Government*, the peace of *Families*, and the delight of *Friendſhips*, are all built up upon it.

Next, *Charity fails not, but abides for ever*, ver. 8. of this ſame Chap. It is a vertue that conſtitutes a part of Heaven, and helps to make up the enjoyments of that ſtate of moſt perfect bliſs; and

and certainly if we could but imitate the *vertue* and *perfections* of Heaven, we ſhould, in the ſame degrees, and proportion, partake of its happineſs too, and *that* which is one of the great ingredients of the pleaſure of the other World, would, if practiſed, be no ſmall edition to *that* of this.

Theſe being the glorious conſequents of Charity, it is but natural and reaſonable, that we ſhould love it as we do our ſelves, and purſue it with the ſame eagerneſs we do our pleaſure and our happineſs.

2. From *the nature of God*; who hath ſufficiently manifeſted himſelf to the World, in all his Works, to be *Love: God is Love.* Of which, what more amazing inſtance can we have *in him*, than his giving his Son to die for us, and pardoning us freely thorough his blood; and *in his Son*, than in offering up himſelf for us?

And becauſe uncharitableneſs bears ſuch a contradiction to his Nature, he therefore reſolves, that no ſuch monſtrous and ill-natur'd Creature ſhall enter into Heaven, and hath frequently aſſur'd us that *our* deportment towards one

one another ſhall be the Standard and meaſure of *his* towards us; *If ye forgive men their treſpaſſes, your Heavenly Father will alſo forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive you your treſpaſſes*, Mat. 6. 14, 15.

The natural influences deducible from hence, are, That he, who loves God muſt love his Neighbour alſo, becauſe he cannot be the Child of God, nor acceptable to him, without ſharing of that bleſſed affection which God hath for the World; and though the provocation of a Neighbour may have very juſtly incens'd him into hatred and deſire of revenge, yet he cannot refuſe his pardon to the requeſts of a God who hath done ſo much for him, and of Jeſus who hath died for him. And Secondly, if we cannot be pardon'd our ſelves unleſs we pardon others, it ſeems *our own* neceſſities as well as *theirs* engage us to Charity, for we are become both Criminals and Judges at once, and whilſt we forgive *others*, we are merciful to our ſelves, and whilſt we revenge and hate *others*, we are cruel and barbarous to our ſelves.

3 The

3. The Goſpel eſtabliſheth a cloſer *Relation* between mankind than that of Nature: by the communion of the ſame Faith, the ſame Spirit, the ſame Sacraments (whereof one is but a holy league of Charity) and ſo in one word we are incorporated, and become all but members of the ſame body: and therefore, as in *Joſeph*, nature prevail'd above the ſenſe of wrongs, and remembring not that they were his enemies, but that they were his Brethren, he fell upon their necks and kiſſed them, and wept through joy and tenderneſs towards thoſe Brethren, who without the leaſt ſoftneſs or relenting had expos'd him, if not to a certain death, to baniſhment and ſlavery: ſo muſt we Chriſtians, remembring by what ties we are faſtened and united, no more harm or hate one another than we would our own Limbs, our own Bodies.

4. The Goſpel convinces us of *the meanneſs* and *worthleſneſs* of all things here below, not only of Wealth, but even of Reputation and Life too (of the Body, the Soul's ſecured beyond the reach of man) and ſo makes it both the eaſier

task

task to part with them in the ſervice of Religion, and not ſo eaſie to ground the ſubject of a quarrel on them.

5. It annexes precious promiſes to the performance of this duty, *i. e.* an aſſurance of Reward in this Life, and in the other, of happineſs in overflowing meaſures.

By this time it is eaſie to diſcern,

1. What *kind of thing* true Charity is. How ſweet and gentle, how kind and meek a temper it is: how *beneficial* to mankind, how *delightſome*, to our ſelves and how like God and acceptable to him it makes us.

2. What a *Streſs* God lays upon this duty; how dear a value he hath for it; that Charity is the very Life and Soul of Religion; and that to be a Chriſtian without Charity, is an unnatural contradiction: And therefore

It cannot chuſe but raiſe my wonder to obſerve, That thereare a ſort of people, who though they do no harm, do no good neither; who ſtudy nothing but their proper intereſt and pleaſure, and ſo if juſt (which is the moſt) are far from Charitable; and yet they hope

hope to be ſaved. Much more am I amaz'd to obſerve, that there are another ſort, who are meer Lions in their Families, Bears and Wolves in the Neighbourhood, and it may be worſe in the State, who are bad neighbours, worſe Husbands and Maſters, worſt Subjects, and yet they call themſelves Chriſtians, which is for men, who are not fit to live on earth to hope for Heaven. And yet I ſtill wonder more, when I obſerve, that there is another ſort of men, who are great *Devotioniſts*, long, and ſometimes paſſionate too in their prayers (unleſs the paſſion be meerly theatrical, which is not a ſettled affection, but the meer *ſally* of a ſudden heat, ſevere and grave in their outward deportment, and huge zealots for this or that cauſe, or particular doctrine, and yet they are *froward* and *peeviſh*, *ſowre* and *ſullen*, and *cenſorious* and *covetous* and *proud*, and *inſolent*, and *diſobedient*, and yet theſe men are ſo far from calling into queſtion their Salvation, that they count themſelves *Spiritual*, and the eſpecial *Favourites* of God, deſpiſing the reſt of mankind, as *carnal*, *moral*, *blind* things; by what means

they arrive at this dangerous ſtate I will not now examine, but I will beſeech all ſuch to lay to heart theſe general truths; that he who *Loves his God, muſt love his Neighbour too*; *He that prays muſt do good and communicate too*; *he that is devout and zealous muſt be meek and humble, and charitable and obedient too*, or elſe their Religion is unnatural, their devotion a meer humour, or melancholy, or any thing but holineſs; they are ſo far from being Chriſtians, that they want ſome degrees of humanity, to perfect them into Men.

The Prayer.

O *Moſt gracious and merciful God*; *enlighten my underſtanding, that I may know thee, and diſcern the lovelineſs and beauty of all thine attributes, eſpecially thy goodneſs towards the Sons of Men*; *and ſhed forth thy ſpirit of Love in my heart that I may ſeek thee, and delight in thee, and make it my buſineſs to contemplate, and to ſerve thee.*

And may the example of thy Mercy toward Mankind, and me in particular, and the example of my bleſſed Saviour, laying down

down his life for his enemies; enkindle in me ſuch a true affection towards my neighbour, that I may love him as my ſelf, or as Chriſt loved me; that I may walk as the bleſſed Jeſus did, in abundance of kindneſs and meekneſs, and patience, and in all inſtances of an Heavenly Charity, and ſo may at laſt enter into that Heaven, which is the eternal abode of Peace and Love. Amen, Amen, *bleſſed Lord.*

CHAP. VII.

Of Temperance. A falſe notion of it examined. The true one ſettled, from the great end of it, from Scripture deſcriptions of it, from the Example of Chriſt and his Diſciples. The motives to it.

BY Temperance is meant ſuch an Abſtinence from the pleaſure of the body, as the Goſpel requires; and therefore I will enquire,

1. What rules of Temperance it preſcribes us.

2. What motives to the duty it makes uſe of; and,

3. What method it enjoins for the attainment of this grace.

The Common measure or Standard of Temperance examined.

1. *Of the Rules of Temperance.*

The common Rule and Standard which most have made use of to conduct men in eating and drinking, *&c.* is *the end of those Acts*, that is, the health and strength, (the welfare) of the body; but I have great reason to dislike of this Rule, for if it be taken in a strict and close sense, it lays a snare for mens consciences, and must reduce all to the meer necessities of nature, and, so many enjoyments, which are innocent enough, nay sometimes upon some emergencies necessary, will be utterly sinful; and Religion will be made a meer burthen, and mens minds be fill'd with endless scruples: but if taken in as wide a sense, as some men, I see, understand it, it is apparently false; and I hope none will affirm that all those Pleasures that are not inconsistent with the welfare of the Body, are therefore not inconsistent with Religion, this were to open a gap to sensuality and unchristian freedoms; for I do not question but that any man without prejudice to the health of his body, may be guilty of intemperance in the true notion of it; that is, any man may eat or

or drink to the enraging of his luſt, to the ſoftning and ſenſualizing of his mind, without the hazard of a Fever, or a Head-ach: On theſe accounts I cannot but look upon this Rule as very uſeleſs and improper, if not dangerous for a Chriſtian, and a proper rule of nature only in ſuch a ſtate which hath no proſpect of another life; and therefore I think my ſelf obliged to inquire in the Goſpel for a better. I think then we ſhall eaſily find what it is the Goſpel means by temperance, by inquiring,

The true Rule of Temperance aſſerted.

1. What is the end it aims at in enjoyning this duty.

2. By what words it deſcribes and expreſſes it.

3. The examples of our Saviour and his followers in this point. Likewiſe the motives it adds, and the method it preſcribes; will ſerve to clear up its intention to us.

Of Temperance.

The great end of Temperance St *Paul* ſuggeſts to me, 1 *Cor.* 9. 25. Every man who ſtriveth for the Maſtery is temperate in all things; the means are

then proper, when they are ſuited and fitted for the attainment of their end. And by this Alluſion the Apoſtle intimates, that the end of our Temperance is a ſtriving for the Maſtery, that is, a Conqueſt over the World, and the Body; for the Goſpel repreſents the World and the Fleſh, as thoſe enemies, againſt which the Chriſtian is to be engaged in a continual warfare, and tells us, that the luſts and pleaſures of them do War againſt the Soul. Religion being nothing elſe but the Love of God and heavenly things, the Goſpel endeavours all that it can to wean us from all fondneſs for, or delight in the World and the Fleſh, it being impoſſible to ſerve two ſuch contrary intereſts: By a clear conſequence from all this, I conclude, that we are to endure hardſhip as good Souldiers of Jeſus Chriſt, that we are to abſtain from fleſhly luſts as ſtrangers and Pilgrims. In plainer words; that "that abſtinence from ſenſual pleaſures, "which renders the body tame and go-" vernable, ſerviceable to the Soul, and "cheerful in the exerciſe of Religion, "which doth enfranchiſe the mind of "men

" men from its captivity to ſenſe, which " doth eſtabliſh its dominion over the " brutiſh part; ſo that the man lives " the life of faith, and not of ſenſe, " is diſengaged from the World, and ſo " ready to depart; is that Temperance which the Goſpel of Chriſt requires: and by conſequence on the other hand, " that indulgence to worldly pleaſures, " which tends to pamper and enrage the " body, to awaken our paſſions for this " preſent ſtate, to endear and recom- " mend the world to us, to make the " minds of men ſoft and feeble, heavy " and ſenſual, to make our temper deli- " cate and wanton, unable to ſuffer, " and froward, if our appetite be not ſatisfied, is flatly contradictory to the Temperance of the Goſpel of Chriſt.

This is a Rule, which if well conſider'd, and conſcientiouſly applied to every particular, will ſufficiently conduct man to the paths of this great duty, and anſwer all ſcruples concerning the enjoyment of pleaſures, whether they be real or fantaſtick ones. For is any Man ſuch a ſtranger to himſelf, that he doth not underſtand the working of his

own Soul; that he cannot give an account of the paſſions which he feels, nor know by what methods he is betray'd into the Love of the world, and a decay of his Religion? Doth not every man feel what kind of eating and drinking clogs the Soul, and emboldens the body, what kind of ſights or dalliance doth dart the poiſon of luſt and ambition into our very Souls? Or what doth thaw and melt us, and make us love and hate, delight or grieve, hope and fear like the Children, not of Light, but of the World? Certainly unleſs a man will impoſe upon himſelf, he muſt needs diſcern the birth, and growth of his own Paſſions, and diſcover the methods by which he doth inſenſibly degenerate into a looſe, or cold, or ſenſeleſs Spirit.

2. This Temperance is in general expreſs'd in Holy Writ by *Mortification*, and *Holineſs*: the former imports ſuch a change in the body, as flattens and deads its appetites for the World, *I am crucified to the World, and the World is crucified to me*: The latter imports an excellent and Godlike nature, a transformation

on of man into as Spiritual a frame, as a man in this imperfect State is capable of arriving at.

And certainly, men thus qualified cannot place their delight in the ſenſual enjoyments of this life, how innocent ſoever they may be, the World hath nothing *agreeable* to Souls of this Heavenly nature, nothing *worthy* of them: Temperance in the particular branches of it, is called Purity, Sobriety, Abſtinence, Modeſty, *&c.* All which are to be interpreted according to the method of the Spirit, in a ſenſe which doth not only reſtrain the outward Acts, but alſo the inward paſſions of man, in a ſenſe which doth not only forbid the commiſſion of groſs ſins, but alſo all tendencies towards them in the body, and in the ſoul: Conformable to this Doctrine were,

3. The lives and examples of the Holy Jeſus, and his followers, (tho peradventure it would not be altogether irrational to ſuppoſe, that the extraordinary meaſures of the Divine Spirit, in his immediate Diſciples, and their converſation with the bleſſed Jeſus, and afterwards the freſh memory of all his Power

Power and glory, might render a corporal diſcipline the leſs neceſſary) I will not deny but that our bleſſed Maſter did often accept of entertainments, (nor did I ever deſign to forbid any ſuch thing on particular occaſions, which may warrant them) but it is eaſie to obſerve, how courſe, and plain, and ſparing his conſtant Diet, with his Diſciples, was; how frequent in his faſtings, and his watchings, he was: As for his Diſciples, after his Departure, their lives were but a conſtant warfare, and the World, and the Fleſh their enemies; They liv'd like Strangers and Pilgrims upon earth, and their pleaſures were altogether Spiritual and Holy.

Theſe were the paths that they trod towards Conqueſt, and a glorious Crown. I can eaſily conceive how their life was filled with ſuch Spiritual raviſhments; how they long'd for the appearance of Chriſt, and how they left the World with ſuch glorious aſſurances, as that, *I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the Faith* (all which may have regard not only to his ſufferings, but alſo to his conflict with the fleſh

fleſh too) *henceforth, there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs, which the Lord the Righteous Judge ſhall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto them alſo that love his appearance.*

But, how that ſoftneſs of converſation, that full and luxurious feeding and drinking, that gariſhneſs and wantonneſs of dreſs, that ſloth and lazineſs of Spirit, which is ſo univerſal in the world, can become the life of a Soldier of Chriſt, I am not wiſe, nor lucky enough to comprehend.

But I can now eaſily diſcern from whence it proceeds, that Religion ſeems ſo unpleaſant a thing, and that men are ſo unwilling to depart hence into another life, it is becauſe we are ſuch imperfect Chriſtians, and we live ſenſually.

Sect. 2.

Motives to Temperance.

It will therefore behove us, to lay to heart the great *motives*, by which the Goſpel engages us to this duty, as,

1. The nature of our preſent ſtate in this World. The poor Soul lives in a treacherous Body, and a tempting World, both which conſpire its ruin; and therefore

fore it must be upon its watch, upon its guard; it is not a time for mirth, and pleasure, and feasting, when the enemy hath seiz'd the outworks, and entred into the very Suburbs; the Soul is striving for the Mastery, and is it sense to arm its enemy, and feed it into a fierce and brutish courage, by indulging those enjoyments which are the food and fuel to its lusts? every sensual pleasure it indulges to the body, is a plain giving ground before the face of its enemy.

2. The reward of this Spiritual conquest, which is fulness of pleasures in the life to come, an Eternity of bliss and happiness; and how rational is it to prefer Eternity to a moment, and that exceeding weight of glory, and unspeakable unconceivable pleasure, to the dreams and mockeries of this imperfect state, even in this present life, we think it becomes our wisdom to renounce trifling pleasures out of the prospect of greater: What a Discipline of severities did those contenders in the *Grecian* Games run through out of the hopes of honour and applause? from whence St *Paul* excellently argues, if *they did this for a corruptible Crown* (a Crown

Crown of Leaves) *How much more ſhould the Chriſtian for an incorruptible one?*

3. The example of a whole Cloud of witneſſes gone to Heaven before us, who preſs'd in thro this narrow *way and ſtrait gate*; but eſpecially the conſideration of a crucified Saviour; for what have we to do, who have taken up the Croſs of Chriſt, with rioting and drunkenneſs, with Chambering and wantonneſs? what reſemblance is there between his Crown of Thorns, his Scourging, his Agony, and the ſecurity and ſloth, the gaity and vanity of a ſenſual Life? for ſhame, let thoſe who profeſs Chriſtianity, do ſomething which may become men, who have taken up the Banner of the Croſs.

4. The great advantage and pleaſure of the ſtate of Mortification. 1. The Soul enjoys a more entire peace, a more abſolute empire, and is not alarm'd by the daily mutinies of Rebellious luſts. 2. It is become a fit Temple for the Spirit of purity to dwell in, for the Spirit of glory and of God to reſt upon, and the conſequence of this will be abundance of inward pleaſure, of peace, and joy, and hope.

5. The

5. The uncertainty of the time of our Saviour's appearance to judgement. And who, that hath a grain of ſenſe, would be ſurpriz'd by that day at unawares? Who would be overtaken by the Judge of the World, in ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs, or any other of the ſinful pleaſures of this Life ?

Sect. 2. As to the means of attaining Temperance, I refer my reader to the Section of Faſting.

The Prayer.

O *Thou God who art holy and a pure Spirit, Sanctifie me in Spirit, Soul and Body, that I may offer up my ſelf unto thee, a holy, living and acceptable ſacrifice ! Enable me to fight the good fight of Faith, to take up the banner of the Croſs againſt the World, the Fleſh and the Devil ; to imitate my holy Saviour, and his bleſſed Apoſtles, that having ſubdued the Fleſh, and conquer'd the World, I may enjoy a more entire peace. and pleaſure in my life, and may at laſt depart with the greater chearfulneſs and triumph out of it, and receive from my bleſſed Saviour an incorruptible Crown.* Amen, Amen, *bleſſed Jeſus.*

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Humility defined. Its influence with reſpect to three things, i. e. *The Gifts of Grace, The Gifts of Fortune, The Gifts of Nature. The Fruits of Humility. Submiſſion to God, Meekneſs towards our Neighbour, Peace and Tranquility in our ſelves. A deſcription of it formed from what is laid down before. The Application of the whole. Motives to Humility.*

THis is the Ornament and Guard of all our graces, that which ſets off and illuſtrates all our excellencies, and keeps us upon our Watch to ſecure them; it is both the foundation and perfection of all vertue; even holineſs and goodneſs without it would be unacceptable to God; and therefore it is well worth your conſideration in the next place.

Humility is a mean opinion, or rather the true knowledge of our ſelves, a ſober contemplation of our infirmities, and a real perſuaſion of our imperfection: which is St *Paul*'s ſobriety of Spirit, or humility

An account of the Nature of Humility.

humility of mind, contrary to the being puff'd up.

The sense of this shedding itself upon the will, renders men modest in *their desires*, and humble in their deportment, which is that other part of humility, whereby a man is enabled to reject praise and honour; and to debase himself to the meanest Offices; thus the blessed Jesus, (though sensible of no meanness besides that of his humane nature itself, yet) *sought not his own honour, and he came not to be ministred unto, but to minister.*

The occasions of Pride removed.

There are three things which are liable to be made the grounds of pride, "the gifts of Grace, of Nature, and of "Fortune: but the humble man, in re- "spect of the gifts of Grace, looks "not upon what he hath attained, but "what is still before; he pays his sa- "crifice of honour, not to that earthen "vessel, which contains the treasure, "but to the God from whose fulness it "is deriv'd; he dwells not upon the "pleasing spectacle of his good Actions, "but mostly on the Catalogue of his "frailties and his sins, and therefore rests "himself on the Mercy of God through

"the

" the bloud of Chriſt, and from freſh re-
" pentances, he takes up freſh reſolutions
" and Spirits every Day.

As to the gifts of Fortune, the World is too much a trifle in the ſight of an enlightn'd underſtanding, to raiſe in a good man, any eſteem or love of it; and if ſo, a man can never prize himſelf for the poſſeſſion of what he ſlights, nor be proud of what he diſpiſes.

As to the gifts of Nature, he muſt value them as they are the gifts of God, but he conſiders withal, that they are but common ones, and are but the imperfect ornaments of this imperfect State, which muſt be done away, when we come into a better: and withal he reflects often upon his blemiſhes and imperfections, his follies and miſcarriages; and conſidering how poor, miſerable, and comfortleſs a thing he ſhould have been, if abandon'd to the conduct of Nature, he lays his mouth in the duſt, and at once admires the bounty and goodneſs of God, and confeſſes his own vanity.

2. The fruit of this Humility, is an entire ſubjection, and reſignation of ones *The Fruits of Humility.*

ſelf to God, meekneſs and patience towards man, a calm and tranquility in ones own boſom; for as to God, conſidering him as infinitely Glorious, and himſelf entirely dependent of him, the humble man compoſes himſelf to believe all he reveals, to obey what he commands, to truſt in him, to attend the Decrees, and the leiſure of Heaven, to ſuffer meekly, and enjoy modeſtly: As to himſelf, out of the Conſcience of how little he deſerves, he is neither ambitious of wealth nor honour, but he is thankful for the paſt, ſatisfied with the preſent, and neither impatient for nor diſtruſtful of the future. And out of a ſence of his own indiſpoſition to good, and the weakneſs of his own ſtrength, he bleſſes God for the grace he hath receiv'd, and though he ſtands he takes heed leſt he fall. As to his Neighbour, out of the diſtruſt of his own abilities, the ſence of his own infirmities, or elſe taught by the example of his great Maſter, who took upon himſelf the form of a Servant, the humble man is more forward to obey, than to command, to believe, than to diſpute; he

is

is ſlow to ſpeak, ſwift to hear, not fond of opinions, but deſirous to be enlighten'd by God and inform'd by man; and therefore on all theſe accounts, an humble Man can never be enthuſiaſtical, obſtinate or ſeditious, for he can never arrive at that height of Spiritual pride, as to conceit himſelf the only favourite of Heaven, and fit for extraordinary illuminations; nor at that height of carnal pride, as to be a buſie-body, a ſtiff aſſerter of his own humour, or judge of his ſuperiours on earth, and ſo think himſelf more fit to Reign than to ſuffer.

" In one word, Humility's whole de-
" portment is ſweet and gentle, its very
" zeal is modeſt, its reprehenſion ſoft
" and timerous, its prayers awful, its re-
" flexions mournful, and its hopes of
" Heaven ſoftly growing; it is neither
" ſevere nor peeviſh, obſtinate nor haſty,
" bold nor ſelfiſh, inſolent nor querulous,
" it can ſuffer its wounds to be prob'd
" and ſearch'd, and kiſſes the hand whilſt
" it loaths the filth; it doth not inſult
" o'er anothers errours, not excuſe its
" own; nay rather its modeſty conceals its
" beauties, and bluſhes at the diſcovery

" of its own excellencies; it never pro-
" ſtitutes to beg praiſes; nay, if it acci-
" dentally meet them, it is rather bur-
" then'd and oppreſt, than than puff'd up
" by them. I will then account my ſelf to
have attain'd to ſome degree of this grace,
" when I can poſſeſs my Soul at reſt, when
" I delight in the milk of God's word,
" more than its heights and intricacies;
" in obedience more than diſputes and
" fancies; when I can receive evil from
" the hand of God, as well as good; when
" I can ſacrifice my own will to the ca-
" price of a ſuperiour, the obſtinacy of
" an inferiour, or the humour of an equal;
" when I can ſuffer wrongfully, and yet
" meekly; when I can look upon the
" glories and the power of this World,
" and contentedly ſay, I am not born for
" theſe, I am not call'd to the enjoyment
" of theſe, but of the Croſs here, and Glo-
" ry hereafter; I am to tread in the ſteps
" of my dear Lord and Maſter, and no-
" thing ſhall make me have any other
" deſigns than thoſe he had; and when I
" have done all this, and am aſſur'd that I
" love and ſerve my God, I rely only
" upon the Merits and Sufferings of my

" Savi-

" Saviour for Salvation and a Crown.

This duty of Humility is the moſt *uſeful*, and moſt *difficult* in Chriſtianity; " the moſt *uſeful*, for it reccommends us " to God, indears us to Men, and eſta- " bliſhes a Peace and Calm in our own " Boſoms; —the moſt *difficult*, for it is to renounce what is moſt near and dear to us, our Intereſts and Pleaſures, our Reputation, nay our very ſelves, our Underſtanding, Will and Affections.

Motives to Humility.

There are two mighty motives which are moſt inſiſted on by the Holy Spirit; the one is, that Humility is the way to the increaſe of Grace here, and to greater meaſures of Glory hereafter; *God reſiſteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble*; and, *He that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted*: the other is the example of our Saviour, who though ſo great as to be the Son of God, and to think it no Robbery to be equal to God, ſo innocent that he had no guilt upon him, none could accuſe him of ſin; ſo dignified as to be Prophet, Prieſt and King, did yet debaſe himſelf to the meaneſt ſervices, on purpoſe that he might leave his Diſciples a pattern to imitate;

though he were adorn'd by all that might give him a juſt claim to Honour, as Birth, Vertue, and the Dignity of the moſt Illuſtrious Functions; yet he was as much the humbleſt as he was the greateſt, as much the moſt meek as the moſt innocent of the Sons of Men; and if he our Lord and Maſter ſtoopt ſo low, what can we, who are at that vaſt diſtance beneath him, do or ſuffer, that is capable of diſparaging us?

Beſides theſe Conſiderations, it will be very uſeful towards implanting humility in us, to know God and our ſelves: his Days are without Beginning or Ending, his Perfections have no Bounds; he is Independent and Immutable; he is his own Heaven, and his own Happineſs: but we are Duſt, and the Sons of Corruption, born yeſterday, and we ſhall die to morrow; our Bodies heavy, ſluggiſh, craſie, beings of a few ſpans long, our Souls are blind and ambitious, paſſionate, froward, jealous, inconſtant, fooliſh things: *thoſe* are the ſeat or abode of numerous pains and diſeaſes, *theſe* of as numerous, and as painful paſſions: the World we live in is a meer

phantaſm

phantaſm and cheat, that firſt invites, and then deludes our appetites; for enjoyment it ſelf is but a dying itch, and the mockery of a waking dream: the the time reflects our ſins and follies: the preſent is troubled with regret, and deſires, and vexations; and the future will be what the preſent now is; for when all is nothing, what can be the end of our hopes and cares but diſappointment?

And all this conſider'd, is not God moſt fit to Govern, and we to Obey! he to be exalted, and we to be humbled! but why do I compare Man to God! let us compare him but to the Angels of God, and how inconceivably more excellent is their being and their ſtate than ours? how wiſe and knowing! how refin'd and pure their ſubſtances! we ſee but through a Cloud, and are clad with an earthy Body; they dwell in the Circles of Glory, in the Sun-ſhine of the Almighty's preſence, and in a numerous Choire of the moſt pleaſant and delightful company. We in long Nights, and cold Winters, and barren Soils, and loneſome ſhades, tir'd with ſullen toilſome Buſineſs, and dull inſipid Converſation,

and only wait for the approaching day, and the rendezvous of bleſſed Spirits in Heaven: *Lord, what is Man!*

The Prayer.

O Thou God, who reſiſteſt the Proud, and giveſt grace to the Humble, poſſeſs me with a meek and humble Spirit! teach me to tread in the ſteps of my bleſſed Saviour, to ſerve and miniſter, to obey and ſuffer; teach me to know Thee my God, and my ſelf, that the ſenſe of thy incomprehenſible Glory, and my Meanneſs may level all my fooliſh conceits of my ſelf, and cloath me with humility; through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

O my God, make me reſigned and obedient to Thee, ſubject to my Superiors, modeſt towards my Equals, and meek to my Inferiors! make me to deſpiſe the praiſe and honour of man, being content with the conſcience of doing good! make me ſee the imperfections of my beſt actions, and rely upon thy mercy for Salvation, through the blood of Chriſt, that my Soul may here find Reſt and hereafter Glory. Amen, Amen, *Bleſſed Jeſus.*

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Of Perfection, Not Every degree of faith Saving, but only that which over-cometh. Perfection what. Attainable in this life. The motives to it. Rules for Attaining it.

IT is an opinion generally received, that the leaſt degree of true Faith will ſave the Soul: but I hope men mean ſuch a degree of it, as overcomes the World and ſubdues the Fleſh; for otherwiſe I ſhould very much queſtion whether it be not that ſeed which *becometh unfruitful, through the cares of the World, and deceitfulneſs of Riches, and the luſts of other things*, Mar. 4. 19. If they ſay that that Faith, which doth not overcome the World and the Fleſh is not *true* Faith, it is as broad as long, for not to diſpute whether (in the place mentioned) the reaſon of unfruitfulneſs was in the ſeed or in the ground, whether it be true Faith or not, I'm ſure it is

is not *ſaving* Faith, ſo that the Rule given us, whereby to diſcern and judge of our ſtate, is a very plain and eaſie one, *viz. He that overcometh the World is born of God.*

If it ſhould be farther inquir'd, how a man ſhall know whether he overcomes the World (though he may with as much ſenſe ask me, how he ſhall know what he loves and hates? what he ſhuns and purſues?) the anſwer is very plain, *his ſervants ye are to whom ye obey.*

So that the whole ſtate of this queſtion may be in few words reduc'd to this. No man can be a ſtranger to his own actions, nor to the operations of his own Soul: *what man knoweth the things of a man, ſave the Spirit of man, which is in him*, which words (if I have any Logick) contain two things. 1. That a man knows his own mind, or if he do not, then. 2. That no man elſe can: therefore ſince a man knows his own actions and his own affections, what he *doeth*, and out of what principles he *doeth* it, he cannot chuſe but know who it is he obeys; but if his life be ſo various, ſo made up of vice and vertue, and the

fleſh and ſpirit be ſo evenly poiz'd, that *which* hath the preheminence, whom he obeys be a matter very *doubtful* and *diſputable* to himſelf, then whether he ſhall be ſaved or no, muſt remain to himſelf, and much more to all others (God alone excepted) equally *doubtful*; and I can gueſs at no other expedient for him, if he hath a mind to rid himſelf of this ſcruple, than entirely to complete his conqueſt over ſin, and to ſhake off that Empire of ſin, which it ſeems to me hath been too long and deeply ſettled and eſtabliſhed; and to go on from one degree of grace unto another, till he arrives at Perfection: (which is the only method to obtain that full aſſurance of hope mentioned, *Heb.* 6. 11.)

With which I intend now to cloſe this firſt part of my Diſcourſe *Of the Nature of Chriſtianity*; becauſe, though it be not a particular *grace*, it is a particular *ſtate*, and therefore deſerves a particular Conſideration; and though we be not oblig'd to it upon *pain of Damnation*, yet we are invited and incourag'd to it by ſeveral glorious Motives and Enforcements, as ſhall preſently appear; and

therefore

What Perfection is.

therefore it is a Goſpel duty. By Perfection (in the ſenſe I now conſider it) the Goſpel implies a State of Grace arrived at its full maturity and ſtrength, grown into *Nature*, and conſummated into a vigorous and delightful *Habit*; it being in this as in all other qualities, they grow up into Habit and Nature, that is, Perfection by degrees.

According to this, the Goſpel deſcribes this State by Manhood and a perfect Stature; and calls our procedure to it, growing, increaſing and going on; ſo that Perfection is nothing elſe but Faith, Love, Temperance and Humility in their greateſt luſtre and ſtrength.

The effect of this State is, that the Life be not only *conſtant, firm, even*, and *like it ſelf*, but alſo *pleaſant* and *delightful* too; not only that the man abſtain from evil and do good, but that alſo he do both with *deſire* and *earneſtneſs* of Spirit, with *eaſe* and with *delight*; not only that he do good, but what is in its kind *moſt* ſo.

Perfection is attainable in this Life.

This is a State which is attainable in this Life, for the Goſpel calls and invites men to it; and if any deny it, it is becauſe

cauſe they frame to themſelves another kind of notion of Perfection than the Goſpel delivers us, which requires of Man no other perfection than ſuch as is ſuitable to his Nature and the Aſſiſtances promiſed by God, and to this preſent State, never as much as dreaming that perfection is the ſame thing in Man as in an Angel: and (whatever men may talk) it doth not reckon the unavoidable imperfections and frailties of men for ſins, at leaſt-wiſe ſuch as can hinder Man from being denominated Perfect, witneſs the whole firſt Epiſtle of Saint *John*.

The motives to this Duty may be compris'd under Four Heads, all deriv'd from the nature of the ſtate it ſelf, Perfection is a ſtate, *Motives to Perfection.*

1. More pleaſing to God.
2. Of greater Security.
3. Of greater Pleaſure.
4. Entituled to greater Glory in the Life to come.

1. More pleaſing to God; if God loves Holineſs, (which no body can doubt) then every degree of holineſs is a new charm, and what is moſt holy is moſt

moſt lovely; and if ſo, every one that profeſſes to love God, muſt be oblig'd to aim at perfection, becauſe he cannot but be oblig'd to pleaſe God as much as he can; and he that doth not may juſtly ſuſpect his conformity to the Divine Precepts to be rather Policy than Religion, and to proceed from a deſire of his own ſafety, rather than the glory and pleaſure of God; unleſs a Spiritual prudence ſhall reſtrain him from attempts or vows of more heroical inſtances of Obedience, for reaſons which Religion may approve of; in which caſe it will be always neceſſary to obſerve this caution, that his choice of a leſſer good do not *proceed from any deſire of gratifying the Body, or from want of Love to God and Holineſs.*

2. Perfection is a State of greater ſecurity; the more ſtrong Faith and Love grow, the more faint and flat are all temptations that beſet us; a Soul which is devout and rais'd is not eaſily lured down by any of the flatteries of luſt; the Soul being long accuſtomed to rule, and the Body to obey, the Soul being us'd to ſpiritual delights, and the Body being

being now perfectly crucified, the Man is become a quite different Being from what he was, and therefore that World which did before take him, hath now no grace nor allurement in it; *I am crucified to the World, and the World is crucified to me.* This State is call'd in Scripture, *Wiſdom*, and *Knowledge*, and *Strength*, which do intitmate to us, that that World, which did before gain upon us only by our blindneſs, and our weakneſs, can now no longer prevail; beſides this, the more like God we grow, the more dear are we to him, and become the more near and peculiar charge of Heaven, which St *Paul*, *Heb.* 6. 9, 10. alledges for a reaſon, *why he was perſwaded better things of them* (than Apoſtacy) *and things that accompany Salvation* (that is perſeverance) becauſe *God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of Love.*

3. It is a State of greater Pleaſure: a State of Peace and Reſt from ſin; for the Man, having eſtabliſhed an entire conqueſt over himſelf, is not frequently alarm'd by the luſts of the Body becauſe it is crucified; the Soul being rais'd, converſing

converſing in Heaven, is now too much exalted to be reach'd by the blaſts of every temptation. 2. It is the nature of a Habit that its acts are eaſie and delightful; for Habit is but another Nature (ſo Holineſs is call'd in Scripture a new Nature) and what is Natural is pleaſant; when our graces are full of Life and Vigour, when our ſight is grown clearer and our affections warmer, and we converſe with God and Heaven; then it is that we begin to enjoy the ſweets of Religion, that we anticipate our Heaven, by performing His will on Earth as it is done in Heaven; Religion is at firſt employed in the unpleaſant though wholſome Severities of cutting off right hands, and pulling out right Eyes, Luſts become ſo natural they were become our Members; but afterwards, having *conquer'd the World, his Commandments are not grievous*, but full of delight and ſatisfaction; in Converſion as in the alteration of an old Building we firſt demoliſh thoſe parts which are not Uniform and Beautiful, and this preſents us with nothing but Rubbiſh and Ruines, but afterwards we raiſe up

an

an orderly, beautiful and lightſome Building, where we may ſolace and entertain our ſelves. 3 An exalted Holineſs is not only delightſome in the very acts and exerciſes of its graces, but in the fruits and effects of them; *Joy*, and *Peace*, and *Hope* are the natural conſequences of this ſtate of Perfection, and its Actions, becauſe ſuch a Man's Love of God is now ſo evident and manifeſt, he hath no longer room to doubt of it; and then what a raviſhing pleaſure muſt it be to be able to ſurvey all the glorious Promiſes of the Goſpel as ſuch which himſelf is an Heir to? who can with full aſſurance think himſelf juſt upon the confines of Heaven, within a moment of entring into Joy, without a very ſenſible tranſport!

4. It's entitled to greater meaſures of Glory in the Life to come: Though the loweſt degrees of future glory be above the Merit of the moſt holy Life, and though God may do what he will with his own, ſo that the chiefeſt Saint could not have juſt reaſon to complain, though the meaneſt were equall'd with

him: yet it is plain that there will be order in another World, and thoſe Stars of the Morning of the Reſurrection will differ in Glory, and this will be proportion'd to their Behaviour in this Life? *He which ſoweth ſparingly ſhall reap ſparingly, and he which ſoweth bountifully ſhall reap bountifully*, 2 *Cor*. 9. 6. Is it not therefore highly reaſonable on this account that we ſhould aſpire after the greateſt degrees of Holineſs we can, for who would not deſire to be *as happy and as glorious* as he can?

It is now apparent, that perfection is a duty propos'd to us, upon very powerful and glorious motives; for who that is wiſe will not take pains to arrive at that perfection, which is a ſtate of greater ſecurity, greater eaſe and pleaſure, more acceptable to God, and entitled to greater degrees of Glory in Heaven?

Means of attaining Perfection.

For the attainment of this State, obſerve theſe few Rules.

1. Believe a Holy, Juſt, Almighty God, every where preſent; *neither is there any Creature that is not manifeſt in his ſight; but all things are naked and open to the eyes*

eyes of him with whom we have to do, Heb. 4. 13. *Nay God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things.* If Heaven be his Throne, Earth is his Footſtool, and therefore walk not only as preparing to meet him, but as already before him: this will awe a wandring ſpirit, and it will not be eaſie to fear and ſin; it will awaken a decaying affection, and it will not be eaſie to love and omit a duty; it will teach us how to judge our actions impartially, and we ſhall neither impoſe upon our ſelves by fondneſs, nor do any thing for opinion ſake, when we conſider, that we have God for a Judge and Spectator. *I am the Almighty God, walk before me and be thou perfect,* Gen. 17. 2.

2. Conſider frequently and ſeriouſly the Life and Death, the Sufferings and the Crown of the bleſſed Jeſus; for his Life will convince you how lovely and pleaſant Vertue is, although it ſeem to the World fooliſh, contemptible and painful: his Death will inform you what Obligation you lie under to Holineſs; for will you not love and obey that Saviour who hath redeem'd you by

his Blood; and are you not ſenſible that our heavenly Father is ſtrangely in love with Holineſs, ſince he doth propagate it by ſuch a method? his Crown and his Kingdom will breathe freſh Life and Spirits into your affections; this is the motive which the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 12. makes uſe of to perſwade us *to lay aſide every weight, and the ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet us, and to run with patience the race that is ſet before us, looking unto Jeſus the Author and Finiſher of our Faith, who for the joy that was ſet before him endured the Croſs, deſpiſed the ſhame, and is ſet down at the right Hand of the throne of God: for conſider him that endured ſuch contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf, leſt ye be wearied and faint in your minds*; upon the ſame bottom is grounded that exhortation of St *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 58. *Therefore my beloved Brethren, be ye ſtedfaſt unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, foraſmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

3. Each morning endeavour to foreſee what temptations you are to encounter

counter that day, and ſummon up all the ſtrengths of Grace and Nature, of Religion and Reaſon, againſt the hour of Trial; ſurvey each part of the Fort, and having diſcovered which is the weak place of the Soul, and moſt eaſily approachable, ſecure it by a ſtrong guard, by arguments, and Prayers, and a diligent watch; there are many things harſh to fleſh and bloud, which are to be undergone for the ſake of Chriſt, and therefore weigh well the ſtrength of your own reſolutions; whether you are able to engage ſo powerful an enemy as the World and Fleſh: Thus our bleſſed Lord, when, *Luk.* 14. 26, 27. he had told them, that if they would be his Diſciples they muſt bear his Croſs, exhorts them to conſider beforehand their engagement, and to ſee that their preparations be ſuitable to the difficulty, by the examples of a *builder*, who firſt ſetteth down to count the coſt, whether he have ſufficient to finiſh his intended building; *and of a King*, who going to War with another King, doth firſt ſit down and conſider, whether he hath ſtrength enough to meet him: and

when you have done this, commit your ſelf by Prayers to God, and then march forth out of your Chamber into the World, like a Souldier out of his Camp into the Field upon the day of battel.

And each evening look over all the paſſages of the day, and ſee how you have behaved your ſelf, what victory you have gain'd, what ground you have got, what grace is moſt faint and ſickly, and always cloſe this exerciſe with a ſerious reflection upon the nature of thy Life, how faſt it ſteals away into Eternity; enter in fancy into the dark Chamber; and mark how thou muſt lie in thy bed of ſickneſs and of Death; conſider how all thy hopes and comforts, all thy deſigns and purpoſes, as far as they concern this world, muſt vaniſh like a dream: and think what need thou wilt then ſtand in, of all the ſtrength and comfort which Reaſon and Religion, the Miniſtry and Prayers of thy Spiritual guide and Friends, and the Conſcience of a well-ſpent Life, can furniſh thee with; then thou wilt need a ſtrong Faith, and a vigorous Love, and an entire Humility to enable thee to bear thy agonies

patiently,

patiently, and part with the *world cheerfully*, and meet thy God *compos'dly*.

4. Do not indulge thy ſelf in the Enjoyment of the utmoſt liberty, which is conſiſtent with *Innocence*. Vice borders very cloſely upon vertue; he that will not be burnt, muſt not approach ſo nigh the fire as to be ſing'd; beſides, ſuch freedoms do inſenſibly inſtil ſenſuality into the Soul, at leaſtwiſe if ſo thick an air do not ſully the Soul, it is too groſs and mixt to whiten and clear it.

5. Catch at every opportunity of a holy diſcourſe, and learn to raiſe from every thing a Heavenly thought, and to manage every accident to ſome Spiritual purpoſe; embrace all examples of an excellent vertue, and ſearch after all occaſions of doing good; declining by all the Arts of Prudence and Religion whatever either company or diſcourſe, whatever either ſight or entertainment, may ſoften thy temper, thaw thy Reſolutions, diſcompoſe thy calm, or allay thy heavenlymindedneſs, or endear the world to thee; Sin ſteals in thorough the eye or ear, dreſſed up in Beauty, Mirth, Luxury, but it wounds whilſt it *delights*, and

it *ſtains* where it *touches*, and it *captivates* what it once poſſeſſes.

6. Be ſure that thy Religion be plac'd in *ſubſtantial* and *weighty* things, not *fanciful* and conceited; for example, 1. As to *matters of Faith*, make it thy buſineſs *to know God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent*, the riches of divine Love and the merit of Chriſts ſacrifice; and do not miſpend thy time, nor weary and diſturb thy Soul with Curioſities and vain diſputes, which uſually grow out of *intereſt* and *pride*, or an *impertinent* and *trifling* Spirit: 2. *As to practice*, let thy Religion be made up of *Fundamental Duties*, not conceits or will-worſhip; of *Charity* and *Humility*, *Obedience*, *Mortification* and *Purity*; *pure Religion and undefiled is this*, to *viſit the Fatherleſs and the Widows*, *and to keep ones ſelf unſpotted from the World*; *Religion* is not a *devout Whimſey*, a *ſullen Auſterity*, or a *blind and giddy paſſion*, but all that promotes the *Honour* of God, the *good* of Mankind, and the *peace* of our own Souls.

The

The Prayer.

O Moſt glorious and Eternal God, guide me, I beſeech thee, in the paths of Holineſs; I am the purchaſe of thy Son's blood; I have known the truth of thy glorious Goſpel, and receiv'd the earneſt of thy Love, thy Holy Spirit; O grant that I may not receive thy grace in vain, that I may not ſuffer wreck in the ſight of my Haven! But aſſiſt me by the might of thy Spirit in the inward Man to perfect Holineſs in the fear of God, to go on to the full aſſurance of Hope, mortifying each day more and more the outward man, and growing in all godlineſs and vertue, and every thing that is praiſe-worthy; that ſo the nearer I approach Eternity, the fitter for it I may be; that my ſtate here being a ſtate of Spiritual delight and pleaſure, each day may give freſh vigour to my Devotion, ſo that I may not faint till I enter into the Joys of my Maſter, and receive a Crown. Amen, Amen, *Holy Jeſus.*

I have conſider'd, 1. Our Obligation to Religion, upon the account of our own

own Souls which can neither be happy in this Life, nor that to come without it. 2. The Nature and Subſtance of that Religion we profeſs, as it regards either *Belief* or *Practice*; from all which it appears, that the Chriſtian Philoſophy is nothing elſe but a Syſtem of moſt exalted Holineſs, ſuch as may become Men, who are deſign'd for another life; it remains now, 3. To conſider by what powerful motives the Goſpel engages us to duties which are ſo far above our natural ſtate and ſtrength.

Practical

Practical Chriſtianity.

PART II.

Of the Motives which the Goſpel propoſes to Holineſs.

CHAP. I.

Of reward and puniſhment in another Life.

THE Motives by which the Goſpel obliges us to Holineſs, are,

1. The reward of Vertue, and Puniſhment of Vice in another World.

2. The Conſideration of the Divine Nature.

3. The conſideration of the whole Hiſtory of our Saviour.

4. The Conſideration of the vanity of all thoſe things which are the temptations to ſin.

5. The nature of Vertue and of Vice.

6. The aſſiſtance of the Divine ſpirit, and,

7. The

7. The consideration of the nature of the Gospel Covenant which leaves a place for Repentance.

1. Of the first Motive.

The first Motive to Holiness, Rewards.

Upon what account Life and Immortality is said to be brought to light thorough the Gospel, I'll not determine; but it is certain that the Gospel shews us how Death is abolished, and how Life and Immortality may be attain'd. 2. That it hath manifested this to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews; and that, 3. The Discovery of it is in full and clear words laid down in almost every Page of it.

The Wicked *shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the Righteous into Life eternal*, Mat. 25. and Rom 2. 5. there is a day mentioned, which is call'd, *The Day of the Revelation of the righteous judgment of God*, because *he will* then *render to every man according to his Deeds, to them who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for Glory and Honour and Immortality, Eternal Life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness; indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every Soul of*

of man that doeth evil, of the Jew firſt and alſo of the Gentile, but glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew firſt, and alſo to the Gentile.

This being ſo, to ſin muſt needs be ſo ſilly and weak a thing no man of common ſence would be guilty of; for can any man of reaſon be at a loſs in ſuch a choice as this, whether he will live eternally, or die? whether he will be happy for ever, or for a moment? (upon ſuppoſal that ſin could make me live one happy moment.)

'Tis true, if there were no proſpect of another Life, no account to be taken in another World, the caſe would be much alter'd; For the Law of our nature being (I humbly conceive) nothing elſe, but the Law or dictates of Reaſon, and the buſineſs of Reaſon being (in this reſpect at leaſt) only to diſtinguiſh between good and evil, our Reaſon would talk to us at another rate, becauſe it would proceed by different principles; good and evil would then peradventure be different things, for whatever would make for the pleaſure and intereſt of this preſent State

would

would be good; and even pleaſure and intereſt would not peradventure be the ſame thing *then* that *now*; for the Soul would not challenge ſo diſtinct a conſideration or Proviſion as now, for it would not be only lawful, but wiſe for it, to become *ſenſual* and *worldly*, and ſo, the ſame pleaſure and intereſt would Miniſter to the happineſs of Both Body and Soul. But now, that we are aſſur'd that we are to live to all Eternity, and that every action of ours hath an influence on that other life, we muſt needs conclude that every action is good or bad, wiſe or fooliſh, as it ſerves or hinders our happineſs in that ſtate to come: That this motive may have its full force, It will behove every man to take as lively a ſurvey as he can of the joys and miſeries of another Life: And, 1. Of Heaven.

of Heaven. It muſt be confeſt, that to be able to ſpeak properly of Heaven, we have need, like St. *Paul*, to be rapt up into it; for the richeſt fancy would be but flat and barren in its framing any reſemblance of the joys and glory of that place: they are unconceivable.

Heaven

Heaven is like the God of it, there is no ſearching of him out unto perfection, but yet there is enough of him manifeſted to prove him to us ſtrangely amiable, and therefore I'll conſider what is manifeſt to us of Heaven.

1. The place.

2. The perſons, (for the objects, they will fall in with theſe) which conſtitute the happineſs of Heaven.

1. As to the place. Heaven, it is the ſacred abode of God and Angels, and therefore it muſt as much exceed this World, as *they* do *us*; for no doubt on't, the wiſe Architect of all things made each Palace proper and fit for the entertainment of that Family it was to receive; and indeed it appears to be a place fit for the Favorites of God to live in, for Heaven is a place of *everlaſting life, and everlaſting happineſs.*

Heaven is the end and conſummation of all things, all things will there be in their higheſt perfection which they are capable of; we are now the rough draught of what the great Artificer intends us; imagine to what glory we may be rais'd; we once were dirt and clay,

ſee

ſee now what comely glorious beings; yet we are to be refin'd much more above what we are now, than fleſh and bloud is above dirt and clay; what difference there is between time and Eternity, between coruption and incorruption, ſo much we differ in our exiſtence and eſſence *now*, from what we ſhall be *afterwards*; for mortality muſt be ſwallowed up of immortality, and corruption of incorruption.

If Heaven be a ſtate wherein all things are conſummated, an end which hath none beyond it, then I infer, 1. That there will be nothing more for us either to *hope* or *fear*, all will be full of *quiet* and *peace*, no paſſions there but *Love*, and *Joy*, and *Wonder*: *There ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain*, Rev. 21.—2. Having obtained our *end*, we ſhall have no farther need of *means*, there will be nothing which is to be done meerly for the ſake of ſomething elſe; as here below the covetous man ſuffers hardſhip, and the toil of conſtant buſineſs, not becauſe he loves trouble, but becauſe he would be rich; the Religious

ligious man offers violence to his own body, not becauſe it is actually pleaſant to do ſo, but becauſe it is in order to a greater good; therefore there being nothing of this to be done in *Heaven*, all the buſineſs and employment of that Life, will be *delight and pleaſure*; hence it is every where in Scripture deſcribed as a State of *Peace*, and *Reſt*, and *Joy*, and *Pleaſure*.

2. As to the Perſons. I a poor creature of this World below, I who have felt the troubles of this mortal State, been tortur'd by the paſſions of Fleſh and Bloud, Fears and Cares, Deſpairs and Hopes, even I am going to a Heaven, where none of theſe can enter, where I ſhall be made happy, with thoſe enjoyments, which make God and Angels ſo, I ſhall be made ἰσάγγελος, equal to the Angels in Heaven, how far above them in my Happineſs! For what a value will the experience of this World make me ſet upon the joys of another? the ſenſe and memory of miſery will make my Heaven double.

I conſider that in that Life to come, we ſhall have Souls and Bodies, though

not such,) as we have now; our Souls will be strangely raised and refined in their nature, and endowed with strange measures of knowledge; this compared to the *other* Life, being like Childhood to Manhood, 1 *Cor.* 13. 9, 10, 11, 12. *We know in part, ——but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away; when I was a Child, I spake as a Child, I understood as a Child, I thought as a Child; but when I became a Man, I put away Childish things; for now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know, even as also I am known*; I am not willing to inferr what kind of measures of knowledge this Text imports, to determine how well we shall be versed in the Philosophy of Grace and Nature, and the World above: how experienced we shall be in the Annals and History of this Life and the other; 'tis enough to say as the Text doth, that what we do see, we shall see *plainly*, not darkly; and what can we see in another Life, but God, *&c.* How rich a pleasure this will be, only ingenious and excellent spirits are capable of fancying:

cying: all may be able to gueſs that it will be a moſt unſpeakable pleaſure, becauſe knowledge is one of the Excellencies of God and Angels, and the delight of the wiſer part of Mankind.

As for the Souls *Affections*, they will ſurely be ſettled on God, or whatever other objects there may be ſubordinate, they will be ſuch as will become ſo pure and holy a Being: for the Appetite of each being flows from the Conſtitution and Nature of it; it now indeed derives mean and degenerous inclinations from its communion with the Body (whoſe contrivance is proper for the ſtate it lives in.)

But when the Body will be raiſed a *ſpiritual glorified* Body, which is to be underſtood in oppoſition to a *carnal natural* one, 1 *Cor.* 15. A Body proper to be an Inhabitant of ſuch a place, and to be a ſuitable companion to ſuch a Soul, fit to comply with its deſires, and in ſome meaſure ſure to partake of its joys, which I may place as the firſt ingredient of the happineſs of the

Body in that Life to come, *i. e.* As it here grieves and joys in the pain or pleaſure of the Soul, ſo there it will much more: if the ſatisfaction of the Soul, now, do, by a happy influence, impart health, and chearfulneſs, and pleaſure to the body, it will there much more do ſo; becauſe, being raiſed *Spiritual*, it ſeems to me that it will be knit in a *cloſer* union, and be more capable of thoſe influences: but beſides this, 2, It will have pleaſures agreeable and natural to it ſelf, which it will reap, 1. from the glory and perfection it poſſeſſes, which will be one peculiar to it ſelf, and of a different nature from that of the Soul, thus in our Saviour on the Mount, (from whoſe transfiguration we may receive a little light) they were two different things, which made up the Beauty of his mind and of his body, Wiſdom, Love, Holineſs, *&c.* were the charms and graces of his Soul, but light, and glory, and proportion the, Majeſty and Beauty of his body: and ſince this body will be in its nature diſtinct from the ſoul (for though ſpiritual, it will not

not be *intelligent*) therefore too it will have objects fit to entertain it; what thoſe objects will be, that I'll not endeavour to diſcover, the Scripture doth in the general tell us, that the place it ſelf will be filled with a mighty glory; that our converſation will be ſtrangely delightful, that there are things *prepar'd for us*, (which are not therefore God himſelf) *which the eye hath not ſeen*, &c. (if that place be to be underſtood of the entertainment of another life.) But leſt any ſhould miſtake me, I do not in the leaſt dream of any *groſs* pleaſure: no, the pleaſure of the glorified body will be as ſpiritual as the body, and no more; from all that I have ſaid I infer,

1. That the joy and pleaſure of the Life to come is moſt perfect and excellent, for the more excellent the being, the more delicate and refin'd its pleaſure, or elſe there could be no difference between the happineſs of an Angel that's raviſht with the enjoyment of Heaven, and a Hog that fattens in his ſtie and grunts at a full meal; and if ſo, how unconceivably great will our pleaſures

be in that ſtate, wherein the worſe and meaner part of us, our very bodies ſhall be ſpiritual and incorruptible!

2. That there is no reaſon that we ſhould be the leſs mov'd and captiv'd by the promiſes of ſuch pleaſures in another life, becauſe they are pourtrayed to us in ſuch an excellence, and luſtre, as doth rather dazle and amaze, than take and pleaſe us; for though now we are as far beneath them, as we are at a diſtance from them, yet then our natures will be made equal to them, and when we ſtand upon the ſame level with Angels, what makes up *their* Heaven will conſtitute *ours* too.

And now, what can man fancy more than this, that our natures ſhould be rais'd to the higheſt perfection they are capable of, and be entertain'd by the moſt glorious objects imaginable! there is only one thing more to be added, that this ſtate be *Eternal*, that we not only have all which our hearts can deſire, but alſo that we have all this for *ever* and *ever*; and this is one property of Heaven too, *the things which are ſeen are temporal, the things which are not ſeen*

ſeen are eternal; now Eternity is a duration that never paſſes; a ſtream of time which ſtill glides on, and yet never runs quite away; a day that never ſets in any Cloud or Night; a ſtate of Life, which ſhall never grow old by time, nor decay by age; a pleaſure which will always delight, and never ſurfeit us; a meeting of the deareſt friends never to part again.

The Influence of the belief of a Heaven.

O my God, how unconceivable is the Glory thou doſt deſign me for, I cannot comprehend what I am going to be! and what can be the influence of all this, but that I ſhould count all the advantages of this preſent Life, dung and droſs in compariſon of the happineſs of the Life to come; that I ſhould count all the afflictions of this preſent life not worthy to be put in the balance againſt the glory that is to be reveal'd; how is it almoſt poſſible for me to reſiſt the charms of ſuch a Heaven! or not to deſpiſe *this world*, who have the proſpect of ſuch a one to come! I need but caſt an eye of Faith upon the joys of Heaven, and it will be enough to confront and baffle all the allurements

of fleſh and blood, and all the gawdy nothings of this fading World; one thought a day of Heaven, would raiſe me ſo far above all the fears and troubles, which diſtract and diſquiet this preſent ſtate, that I could ſit with unconcernment, and ſee all my hopes and intereſts loſt, and ſhipwreckt on the billows of an inconſtant World, whilſt I knew that my Heaven, my Eternity were ſure; nay death itſelf, would be the only thing on this ſide Heaven, which would be an object fit for my deſires and wiſhes; What is it then can tempt a man to ſin, who is thus armed? Who is proof againſt the flatteries or menaces of the World, againſt the ſoft addreſſes of a Wanton, or the impatiences and querulency of a weak tender body; What conflict, if *poſſible*, can be *difficult*, which is to be thus rewarded? Who can faint or languiſh in his race, who hath his eye fixt upon ſuch a Crown?

The Prayer.

O Moſt glorious God, ſtrengthen my Faith in the belief of the inviſible things of another World, that it may enable me to conquer this! imprint in my Soul ſuch a lively Image of that future ſtate, as may make me run with patience and cheerfulneſs the race which is ſet before me! O let me not chuſe my Portion in this Life! Let me not exchaage the Crown and Glories of Eternity, for the pomp and vanity of this Life! Let me not forfeit the pleaſure and peace of that State of bliſs, for the dull momentary Luſts of this mortal earthly State — but let me, who have this hope, purifie my ſelf! Let me make it my buſineſs to be doing thy Will, for which way can I ſo advantageouſly lay out my time and ſtrength, as for an infinite reward? O my God, let theſe conſiderations prevail with me to live ſo, that when I come to die, I may have nothing to do, but to receive a Crown, Amen, Amen, *Bleſſed Jeſus.*

Of Hell.

Now though a meer exile from this Heaven were Hell enough; and there needed no flames, nor darkneſs, to make that ſtate miſerable; for that there ſhould be an eternal day, whoſe light ſhould never ſhine on me! that there ſhould be full tides of pleaſures which I ſhould never taſte of, this is Hell enough.

Yet beſides all this, there are real and endleſs torments to be inflicted upon all impenitent ſinners, when *Chriſt ſhall come to take vengeance on all them who know not God, and obey not the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

The place is a Lake of Fire and Brimſtone, of flame and darkneſs, which together with a worm that never dies, imports the exceſs of that torment which ſhall produce, *weeping and wailing, and gnaſhing of Teeth.*

The Company *is the Devil and his Angels, the fearful and unbelieving the abominable and Murtherers, Whoremongers and Sorcerers, Idolaters and Liars,*

Liars, and all the enemies of God and Goodneſs.

The Duration of this ſtate is for ever, as Eternal as the joys of Heaven, *an Everlaſting Puniſhment*, *the Worm never dies*, and *the Fire cannot be quenched:* And though the Almighty may not be bound up to fulfil his threats (which whether ſo applicable to God as Man, I'll not diſpute) yet certainly our Saviour and his Apoſtles in giving us a Narrative or Hiſtory of the different Iſſues of things, are bound to ſpeak truth.

Hell then is a fixt ſtate of miſery, wherein men have bid adieu to the pleaſures of Earth, and all hopes of Heaven; the memory of paſt pleaſures doth but increaſe their pain; and what's beyond all the miſery of this World, they enjoy not as much as the deceitful Dreams of flattering hopes. —— Hell! where there's no light, nor eaſe, nor God, nor any harmleſs pleaſure to divert the pain a moment! Hell, where only the wretched Objects of an incens'd God do for ever weep and wail!

Is this the Death which is the wages of

of Sin ? Can ſin offer me any pleaſure that can countervail this Eternity of miſeries ? Or is there any thing in poverty, or ſhame, or baniſhment, or death, equal to this Hell ? if not, What blind brutiſh madneſs puſheth me on to ſin ? Can I dwell with Everlaſting Burnings ? Can I be content to live in an endleſs Night of pains and horrors? Adieu my fatal pleaſures ! I had rather ſtarve and macerate this Body into ſobriety, than by indulgence betray it to the rage and fury of Almighty Vengeance. I'll ſhut my eyes againſt all forbidden-Fruits, rather than for ever deprive them of the ſight of Heaven, and cloſe them up in an Eternal Night ; Welcome whatever Penances Religion may impoſe upon me, whatever the World may threaten me with for the diſcharge of a good Conſcience ; I'd watch and faſt till *Death*, rather than be *Damn'd*, I'd be the ſcorn and hate of *Mankind*, rather than of *God*. Are not theſe terrible Truths ? Are they not arm'd with Lightning and Thunder, enough to ſtartle the moſt hardened ſinner ? Good God, what makes the

the World ſo dead, ſo callous, that ſuch dreadful Objects cannot rouze nor pierce them! It muſt needs be, becauſe they put that evil day ſo far off, that the biggeſt terrors of it look but like Motes at ſuch a diſtance.

But ſurely we miſtake our ſelves in our computation: we are now in *Time*; How narrow is the *Iſthmus* which parts *Time* from *Eternity*? Or is there any Partition at all? but one *groan* that the frame of our Nature cracks with, but one parting *moment* wafts us over upon the ſhore of another World; Heaven and Hell they are not at the *diſtance* of ſo many *years* from this World, but juſt of *ſo much time* as will ſerve us to die in: And is this ſo much, that we ſhould frolick and wanton in our ſins as if we were not within ken of danger? there's ſcarce a moment in the day, wherein ſome Soul or other, in ſome part of the World, doth not make its *Exit* into another life; and ſhall I ſin as ſecurely, as if my *time* and *death* were at my own diſpoſal? I came but a few years ago into the World, and within a few more I muſt go out on't; how ſoon this day will

will come, I know not, I'm ſure that the *Sentence* of Death is paſt upon me already, I only wait the *hour* of *Execution*, which any trifling cauſe can be the inſtrument of; I may die of *pleaſure*, or of *pain*; I may die of *want*, or *fullneſs*; I may die of *deſire*, or *enjoyment*; What is it then which cannot give Death! the very height of health is a degree of ſickneſs; my Scull is weak, my Skin and fleſh thin and ſoft, my heart tender, and my paſſions eaſie; my inner part is full of ſtrange mazes, veſſels curiouſly contriv'd, and ſubtilly compos'd; what a little will ravel this intricate contexture, and diſcompoſe this delicate frame; and ſhall I be as ſecure, as if my ſtrength were Iron, and my ſinews Braſs, and the poſition of my parts fixt as the Decrees of Heaven!——No, no, I'll live in continual expectation of my Death; I'll examine the State of my Soul each Evening, and cloſe my eye-lids, as if I were to awake next morning in another World; I'll often take my leave of this World, and fancy I ſhall ſee this, or that pleaſant object no more, no more; and I'll addreſs my ſelf to my God, as if my Soul

Soul were ready to take wing, and I'll ſoberly conſider the *Nature* of my God, the value of Chriſt's *Sacrifice*, and the *Truth* of my Faith; and ſo I ſhall learn to diſingage my ſelf from this World, and to die *handſomely* and *comfortably*, if not in *rapture*.

The Prayer.

O *Moſt gracious God, who has hedg'd about our ways, that we may not ſtray and wander into ruin! who haſt endeavoured to* frighten *us into happineſs, by the dread and terrours of a Hell! O grant that this fear may be fixt in my very fleſh, and produce in me a cautious and a wary deportment; that I, remembring that our God is a Conſuming Fire, may not dare to provoke thee to wrath and indignation againſt me! And grant, O moſt merciful Father, that I may not put the day of death far from me, and flatter my ſelf into ſecurity and miſery, but live each day as if it were my laſt, becauſe I do not know but that it may be ſo; that I may enter at laſt into that ſtate where there ſhall be no more conflict with*

with ſin, nor fear of death, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

CHAP. II.

Of the ſecond Motive to Holineſs, i. e. *the conſideration of the* Divine Nature. *Its Influence three fold.* 1. *It diſcovers the nature of Holineſs, and Sin.* 2. *Evinces the reaſonableneſs of ſerving God.* 3. *It fortifies the perſwaſion of future Rewards and Puniſhments.*

THe knowledge of the Nature of God is ſo powerful an enforcement to Vertue, and a determent from Vice, that *Religion*, and the *knowledge of God*, and *Irreligion*, and a *want* of that *knowledge*, are made uſe of by the Spirit of God, as expreſſions of the ſame import: as 1 Cor. 15. 34. *Awake to righteouſneſs, and ſin not; for ſome have not the knowledge of God.*—And this, not without reaſon; for the knowledge of God will,

1. Diſcover to us the Nature of Holineſs, and of Sin.

2.

2. It will convince us how reaſonable it is that we ſhould ſerve him: And,

3. It will confirm in us a full perſwaſion of the Reward of Vertue, and Puniſhment of Vice.

The Knowledge of God diſcovers the different Nature and tendency of Holineſs and Sin.

To this purpoſe therefore let us conſider the Nature of God, as it is taught us in the Goſpel of that Son of God, who lay in the Boſom of his Father, and hath declar'd him to us: And the firſt thing is, that *God is a Spirit*, Joh. 4. 24. and thoſe Attributes which the Goſpel aſſigns him, and which are a fuller diſcovery of his Nature, are *Knowledge*, *Wiſdom*, *Holineſs*, (under which may, in the opinion of ſome, be comprehended *Goodneſs*, *Juſtice*,) and *Power*, and *Dominion*. ——Now from that reſemblance which *Religion* implanted in the heart hath to theſe, it is call'd, the *Divine Nature*, and the *Image of God*; and it is highly reaſonable, that the Worſhip ſhould be ſuitable to the God it is paid to; and therefore the Rule and Standard of Holineſs is the Divine Nature, and nothing elſe; the beauty of Holineſs, and the deformity of ſin is not to be deriv'd, at leaſt *primarily*, from the

conveniency or inconveniency of the one or other in this preſent life, but from a tendency to imprint or efface this Divine Image in us.

This is the way of our Saviour's and his Apoſtles arguing from the *Divine Nature* to our *Duty* thus, becauſe God is a *Spirit*, therefore he is to be worſhipp'd in *Spirit*, and in *Truth*; becauſe he is *pure*, therefore they muſt *purifie* themſelves who approach him; becauſe he is *holy*, therefore his worſhippers muſt be holy too; and becauſe he is *love*, therefore they who abide in him muſt abide in *love*; all his Children muſt imitate the perfections of the Divine Nature;— *Be ye perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect.*

From hence it is eaſie to diſcover, why the God of Heaven hath ſuch an Everlaſting Quarrel againſt ſin, and why he delights ſo much in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs: Sin embaſes the man, and depraves the Spirit which is in him into a ſenſual natural man, and ſets him at the fartheſt diſtance from, and contradiction to God; but Holineſs is a reflection of his own Beauty and Excellency, it is the exalting man into a

ſpiritual

ſpiritual and Heavenly Nature. This is a plain account of the Nature of Holineſs and Sin, and why the one is ſo lovely, and the other ſo ugly, why the one is ſo dangerous, and the other ſo advantageous.

Shews the Reaſonableneſs of ſerving God.

2. The knowledge of the Divine Nature convinces us of *the reaſonableneſs of ſerving God*: There can be but two reaſons to ſerve; either, 1. *An Obligation to the perſon we ſerve*, and then our ſervice is either *Duty* or *Gratitude*; or elſe, 2. *A regard to our own intereſt or pleaſure.* In the knowledge of the Divine Nature we ſhall find all theſe Obligations to his ſervices. If we conſider God as that Principle *in whom we live and move, and have our being*, Acts 17. 28. or as *one who doeth us good*, gives *us rain from Heaven, and fruitful ſeaſons, filling our hearts with food and gladneſs*, Acts 14. 17. What can be more reaſonable, than that we ſhould be thankful to him? but, if we conſider him farther, as Redeeming us by the Bloud of his Son, inſtructing us by the Light of his Goſpel, aſſiſting us by the Power of his Spirit, and adopting us

into the hopes of an incorruptible Crown; What can be more reaſonable, than that we ſhould devote our ſelves to his ſervice, and offer up our ſelves a holy, living, and acceptable Sacrifice to him? If we conſider him as our Creatour, and the Lord of Heaven and Earth, what can be more reaſonable, than that we his Creatures ſhould obey his Laws?

If we have regard to our own *Intereſt*, all our preſent enjoyments and future hopes depend upon him; to be guided by infinite Wiſdom, to be protected by infinite Power, to be bleſt by him who is above all things, and can make us happy as he pleaſes, are things which a wiſe love of our ſelves would make us earneſtly deſire: As for pleaſure, beſides that which flows from the perſuaſion of all theſe advantages which accrue to us from his Service, and beſides the peace and true freedom which Devotion gains us, there is a ſtrange pleaſure in the contemplation of the moſt Excellent Being, in whom is united all that is any way taken with a Rational and Immortal Soul.

3. This

3. This knowledge of God will *confirm us in a firm perſwaſion of the reward of Virtue, and puniſhment of Vice:* for whilſt it diſcovers ſin ſo exceeding hateful, not only upon the account of its contradiction to the Divine Nature, but alſo its baſe ingratitude and folly, and diſcovers the Excellency and Lovelineſs of Holineſs; it doth at the ſame time manifeſt the reaſon why God, who is a holy God, doth encourage the one by ſuch glorious promiſes, and deter us from the other by ſuch amazing threats: for whether we conſider him in himſelf, the purity of his own nature makes him love goodneſs and hate vice; and how contemptible were either his love or hate if happineſs be not the effect of one, and miſery of the other; or if you conſider him as the Governour of this World, it is inconſiſtent with his Majeſty to ſuffer the violation of his Laws without puniſhing the bold Offender. *Demonſtrates the Neceſſity of Rewards and Puniſhments.*

So that now there's nothing farther neceſſary to work this perſwaſion in us, but that, 1. We ſhould be perſwaded that neither our *good* nor *evil actions* can

be *conceal'd* from him: And 2. That he is arm'd with *ſufficient power* to bleſs and reward the righteous, and avenge himſelf of the ſinner; and both theſe Truths we learn from his infinite Knowledge, and infinite Power, both which we are abundantly taught in the Goſpel of Chriſt to belong to God: *God is greater than our hearts and knoweth all things: Fear not them which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul, but rather fear him which is able to deſtroy both Soul and Body in Hell*, Mat. 10. 28. And this God, thus *knowing*, and thus *powerful, without any reſpect of perſons, judgeth according to every man's work*, 1 Pet. 1. 17.

All this now amounts to thus much, that Vertue and Vice are not *indifferent things*, but that the one is moſt *lovely*, the other moſt *loathſome* to God; therefore the one is moſt *fatal*, and the other moſt *beneficial* to its Votaries; for there is an infinitely glorious Being, who is moſt deeply *concern'd*, and every way *able* to pour forth Bleſſings on the righteous and Vengeance on the ſinner.

The

The Prayer.

O Glorious God, let my knowledge of thy Nature teach me to deny all iniquity, and to be holy as thou art holy: Let thy Goodneſs make me love thee, and thy Power and Juſtice make me fear thee, and let both wing my Devotion, and clog and damp my Luſts! Let thy Truth and thy Power beget in me a Perfect aſſiſtance in thee! Let thy Wiſdom and thy Love perſwade me to ſubmit quietly to thy Will! that I may walk before an Almighty God and be perfect, and ſo may enter into thy Joys in the Life to come, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

CHAP. III.

Of the Third Motive to Holineſs; i. e. *The Conſideration if the whole Hiſtory of the Son of God*, Jeſus Chriſt. *The Life, Death, and Glory of* Jeſus *conſidered. In his Life, the deſign of his Doctrine, and the Influence of his Example. His Death conſidered as an Expiation of*

our Sin, or an inſtance of his obedience; and the influence of each. The Glory of Chriſt, a demonſtration and lively repreſentatton of the Chriſtians future reward.

Our Saviour's Life a Motive to Holineſs.

OUR Lord and Saviour may be conſider'd either in his *Life*, his *Death* or *Glory* beginning in his Reſurrection; the knowledge of him, in each of theſe is a ſtrong engagement to *Holineſs*, and a determent from *Vice*.

Firſt, In his *Life*: And here we may look upon him with reference to his *Doctrine* or *Example*, both which conſpire in this one aim, *to implant Holineſs in the World* and *to root out Sin*; for look upon him with reference to his *Doctrine*, and we ſhall find this was the great buſineſs of his Life, to inſtruct men in the will of God, to acquaint them with a true and ſpiritual Holineſs; *for as the Law came by Moſes, ſo grace and truth came by Jeſus Chriſt*; in regard of which he calls himſelf *the Way, the Truth and the Life*; and all this by Commiſſion from the Father, *Joh.* 15. 15. *All that I have heard of the Father I have manifeſted unto you.*

From

From hence I may inferr, That the planting the World with Holineſs was an undertaking becoming the Son of God; a deſign worthy of his Incarnation; the Jews vainly expected that he ſhould have built them up into a glorious Empire, end ſecured to them the enjoyment of *Honour* and *Pleaſure* in this Life; but ſince the meek and humble *Jeſus* deſpis'd this as a trifling deſign, it manifeſtly appears, that Mortification (in him Self-denial) is above all the Romantick gallantry of ambitious ſpirits; That to be *Good* is ſomewhat more noble than to be *Great*, to *Deſpiſe* the World is more than to *Conquer* it; to ſubdue the Fleſh, a richer happineſs than to be able to careſs it with all the flatteries of Luxury and Greatneſs; and to *know God* and *obey* his *Will* a greater honour and happineſs than to command the Lives and Fortunes of Mankind. —— How can this Conſideration chuſe but beget in the minds of men a ſtrange *Veneration* for Religion, and a Love of Holineſs? Why ſhould we with a prepoſterous ambition affect thoſe fooleries of the World, and neglect true honour and happineſs,

happineſs, true greatneſs and perfection? though we our ſelves ſhould not be able to diſcover it; yet we may very reaſonably collect both the Beauty and Neceſſity of Holineſs, from the *value* an infinitely wiſe God hath of it, which he doth ſufficiently expreſs in labouring the reformation of the World with ſo much earneſtneſs; in employing ſo much care and ſo much wiſdom about it; in making uſe of ſo glorious an Inſtrument as his own Son, *the brightneſs of his Father's Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon.* The works of Nature and Providence, together with that light he ſhed upon our Nature (being ſufficient to work in us a natural Religion,) had left our diſobedience inexcuſable; when he added ſo many other miraculous manifeſtations of his *Glory* and his *Will*, and the inſtruction of Prophets, (authoriz'd by Miracles and Foreknowledge of things to come,) all this muſt needs render them to whom it was addreſſed much more inexcuſable; and what ſhall we think of our ſelves to whom he hath, in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of time, ſent Jeſus Chriſt

Chriſt declared to be the Son of God by *Power*, by the *Spirit of Holineſs*, by the *Reſurrection from the Dead?* God might well expect, as the Lord in the Parable, *Surely they will reverence my Son:* The greatneſs of his Perſon is very fit to beget an Awe and Belief too; therefore as the Grace is greater, ſo muſt the Puniſhment of its rejection: This is the concluſion St *Paul* draws from the Divinity of his Perſon, prov'd in the firſt Chapter to the *Hebrews*. *Therefore we ought to give the more earneſt heed to the things which we have heard, leſt at any time we ſhould let them ſlip; for if the word ſpoken by Angels was ſtedfaſt, and every tranſgreſſion and diſobedeence received a juſt recompence of reward, how ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great a Salvation, which at the firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord*, Heb. 2.

If we ſecondly conſider the life of Jeſus, only as a *great Example of the moſt exalted Holineſs, of Obedience* towards God, *Charity* towards his Neighbour, *Purity* and *Self-denial* towards Himſelf, we ſhall not only find in it a clear

clear light to direct us in the practice of Vertue, but also powerful Motives to ingage us to it; for if our great *Lord* and *Master*, the Son of God, did thus deny Himself and renounce the World, what kind of Humility and Mortification will become *us* who are so far beneath him, and in whom are such violent propensions to sin; how will it become us to walk, who profess our selves the Disciples of so holy and so excellent a Master! we cannot be his Disciples, unless we walk as he walk'd; for this was it he aim'd at, to set us an Example, and the thing we are to learn of him is his Holiness: *If ye continue in my word then are ye my disciples indeed. Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your Souls: he that saith he abides in him, ought himself also to walk so, even as he walked*: All which imports a necessity of our imitation of him, and implies our straying from his example, to be an interpretative Renunciation of our Discipleship.——

Secondly, In the Example of his Life, we may discern the *Beauty* and the *Happiness*

pineſs of a holy Life; how lovely, how great, how majeſtick was that Goodneſs and Innocence which ſhin'd in him? and as a conquence of this Holineſs, with what ſerenity and calmneſs of affections did he enjoy himſelf? with what aſſurance of mind did he encounter all afflictions, and look forward towards another Life; theſe are pleaſures which all muſt needs value who can underſtand them, and all may enjoy them who will lead godly lives.

Thirdly, From him we learn how *wiſe* and *reaſonable* a thing it is to prefer all the hardſhips which accompany Religion, to the vanities of this World, ſince he who was beſt acquainted with the happineſs of another Life, and could have commanded all the advantages of this, deſpis'd all the flattering pleaſures of this Life, and choſe the Croſs and the afflictions of Righteouſneſs, that he might obtain an everlaſting Crown: Let us chuſe as he did, and we ſhall never be miſtaken; nor let us be frighten'd at any difficulty, the *ſame Spirit* which ſtrengthened him ſhall make us too Conquerours; nor can the World menace

nace us with any thing worſe than what he endur'd, *Want*, and *Scorn*, and *Travel*, and *Death*, a ſhameful and a painful death,——which is that which conſtitutes the

Chriſt's Death a Motive to Holineſs.

Second part of the Hiſtory of our Saviour, and is a very paſſionate invitation to Holineſs, conſider'd either as an *Expiation of our Sins*, or as an act of *his Obedience to God*; as an Expiation, it muſt, 1. Plainly convince the World of the fatal, deadly Nature of ſin; for when I ſee the Son of God ſtruggling with the torments of the Croſs, groaning under the pain of his Wounds, pale and ghaſtly breathing forth his Soul in the agonies of Death; I cannot think that the *Goodneſs* as well as *Wiſdom* of the Divine Nature could have thought fit for ſin to have been aton'd by ſo bitter a Sacrifice, unleſs the weight and horrour of it had called for ſuch an Expiation; and ſhall I play and fool with ſin as a harmleſs thing, when its guilt cannot be cleanſed but by the Bloud of the Son of God? Surely the greatneſs of the Sacrifice was intended to intimate to Mankind the fatal nature of Sin; the

the bloud of Bulls and of Goats purified the Fleſh indeed, but to purge the Conſcience another kind of Sacrifice was needful, even the bloud of the Son of God: I can eaſily read in the Sufferings of my Saviour, that the wages of ſin is death, and ſin is not grown leſs ugly, or leſs hateful to God ſince the Death of his Son; *before the ſtrength of* (*i. e.* that which gives the fatality to) *ſin was the Law*, but now much more the Goſpel, I mean not as the one was a Covenant of Works, and the other is of Grace, but as the one, *i. e.* the Law, had the Majeſty of God ſtamp'd upon it, and ſo each Tranſgreſſion was an affront of the Divine Glory; this other, *i. e.* the Goſpel, arms its Laws with a double Obligation of infinite Glory and inexpreſſible Goodneſs, ſo that the death of the Son of God doth exceedingly inhance the guilt and aggravation of ſin, *and make ſin become exceeding ſinful* — For, 2. To *lay down his life thus for our ſakes*, to expiate our ſins by his bloud, was an act of ſuch amazing love, as ſhould tranſport us into a chearful and ready obedience; *The love of Chriſt*

ſhould

ſhould conſtrain us to live, not to our ſelves, but to him who died for us and roſe again: That the belief of his bitter paſſion for our ſakes ſhould beget in us no tenderneſs nor affection towards him at all, is unnatural, and unpardonable; or that we ſhove love him and not obey him is as unnatural; but that we ſhould be ſo far from loving him that we ſhould hate and perſecute him is a baſeneſs I want words to expreſs: and yet not only Apoſtacy but any courſe of ſin doth crucifie him afreſh, and put him to an open ſhame; for whoever is an Enemy to Holineſs and Goodneſs, is ſo to him too.

2. If we look upon his Death as an *Act of Obedience to his God*, then we learn from it the indiſpenſible neceſſity of parting with Life it ſelf for the ſake of thoſe Truths we profeſs; and that nothing ought to be ſo dear to us as obedience to God: —We learn the great Leſſon of Mortification, called in Scripture, *being crucified with him, made conformable to his Death*, in the ſubduing all our carnal affections, it being highly unreaſonable that we ſhould expect an entrance

trance into Glory by any other path than that of Suffering, and unreaſonable to expect a ſhare in the *Reſurrection* to Glory, if we do not firſt *die* with him.

3. His Glory is the third and laſt part of our Savious's Hiſtory, which is a powerful inducement to Holineſs; this begins in his Reſurrection: Now the Reſurrection of Chriſt from the Dead, is a very clear proof of our Reſurrection, as St. *Paul* argues, 1 *Cor.* 15. and ſo the great Argument to a good Life. A Reſurrection, being demonſtrated to the very ſences of Mankind, leaves no excuſe for ſin; the wicked cannot flatter their Conſciences into confidence by denying it, nor can the hopes of good men droop and languiſh through doubting of it: No, if Chriſt be riſen, then there is a Reſurrection from the Dead, and the ſame power which raiſed him will raiſe us too at his coming; and they who have done well ſhall enter into that Glory which Chriſt now enjoys at the right hand of God, as a reward of his obedience unto Death, *Phil.* 2. and all who imitate

Chriſt's Glory a Motive to Holineſs.

his Life, ſhall in their ſeveral degrees and proportions partake of a reward of the ſame nature; for *we ſhall reign with him, we ſhall ſit with him in his Throne:* And ſurely this example of the reward of Goodneſs cannot but commit a kind of pleaſing violence upon the affections of man, and tranſport him above temptations; this was that Proſpect which raviſh'd the firſt Mattyr into an Ecſtaſie, though on the brink of dangers and death, *Act. 7. 56. Behold I ſee the Heavens open'd, and the Son of Man ſtanding on the right hand of God:* and if we could often lift up our eyes, and faſten them upon this pleaſing ſight, it would unavoidably raiſe us above this preſent World; we ſhould not be diſcouraged at the *poverty* or *reproach* of our Saviour's life, at the *pain* or the *anguiſh* of his Death, if we did but often contemplate the *peace*, and the *glory*, and the *happineſs* which now crowns his Conqueſts. It is very true, that a Life led in *Prayers*, and *Meditation*, and *Sacraments*, and an *Abſtinence* from ſenſual Pleaſures, doth not appear very gaudy or taking to a carnal man; but if

if the ſame man could but behold one who had lived thus tranſlated into Heaven, how would he adore the *wiſdom* and *happineſs* of the Saints! and how devout and holy, how pure and mortified would be his life afterwards! It is ſaid of the Diſciples, who ſaw our Saviour carried up into Heaven, that *they returned to Hieruſalem with great joy, and were continually in the Temple praiſing and bleſſing God*; a clear proof that there would be no painfulneſs in the *induſtry* and *fervency* of a ſpiritual Life, if we did often reflect upon the joys ſuch a life prepares us for, there would be nothing harſh, unpleaſant or diſhonourable in the *modeſty* and *mortification* of a Chriſtian ſtate, if we did but look forward to the Crown and Kingdom it doth gain for us; who that had ſeen our Bleſſed Lord received up with glory into Heaven, would not have wiſhed it had been his turn too, that he had *liv'd* and *dy'd*, *ſuffer'd* and *conquer'd* with him, and had been to aſcend with him out of a troubleſome ſinful World with joy and Triumph into Heaven.

And thus now it evidently appears

that every part of our Saviour's Hiſtory is full of every powerful motives to Holineſs; that all he did and ſuffer'd tended *to deſtroy the works of the Devil*, and to implant Goodneſs and Holineſs in the World; and we muſt not think that a Deſign carried on by God in ſuch a wonderful manner can be otherwiſe than ſtrangely dear to him; nor that if we through our obſtinancy and unnatural diſobedience defeat this Deſign we can ever eſcape utter Damnation, a Damnation more *unſufferable* than that of ſinful *Heathens*. Therefore,

The Prayer.

O *Bleſſed and holy Jeſus, grant me thy Holy Spirit, that I may lay to heart the inſtruction of thy Doctrine and thy Life, and may not only* know *but* do *thy Will; when I look upon thy crucified Body on the Croſs, may I tremble at the guilt and weight of my ſins which ſtood in need of ſo bloudy Sacrifice, and may thy bitter Agonies for me melt me into* Love *and* Paſſion *for* thee, *and this love conſtrain me to obey thee! O may I be willing*

willing to Sacrifice all my Pleaſures to thy Commands, who haſt laid down thy Life for me! and being made conformable to thy Death, then I may look up with pleaſure on thy Glory; *and, Lord, grant that the hope of partaking in it, may make me purifie my ſelf, and walk as thou haſt done, in all* Meekneſs, *and* Charity, *and* Faith, *and* Hope, *that I may be fitted for thoſe Manſions thou art gone before to prepare for me.* Amen, Amen.

CHAP. IV.

Containing the fourth Motive to Holineſs, i. e. the Conſideration of the vanity of all thoſe things which tempt us to ſin.

A Man who ſhould have ſeriouſly laid to heart the ſtrength and importance of theſe Motives to Holineſs (which I have conſidered) would be apt to think, that nothing leſs than ſome unimaginable temptation, or ſome unavoidable neceſſity in the contrivance of our natures, could provoke men to caſt off all theſe Obligations, and break tho-

rough all theſe obſtructions, that he might ſin and die; but on the quite contrary (which doth ſtrangely reproach the folly of the ſinner,)

1. Thoſe things which are the allurements to ſin, have little or no temptation in them.

2. Sin it ſelf is a ſilly baſe thing; And,

3. Man hath ſtrength enough offer'd to enable him to avoid it.

1. The firſt I ſhall have occaſion to conſider fully in the third part of this Treatiſe, and thither I refer the Reader; only by the way we muſt take notice, there is no more ſtreſs to be laid upon this Argument than it will bear; and that this Argument hath ſtill reſpect to the joys and puniſhments of another life: the ſenſual ſatisfactions of Man are very little and trifling, compar'd with the pleaſures of Heaven, and it can never be worth a mans while to be damn'd for them; yet ſure if there were no life to come, it would behove every man to be content with, and make the moſt of this: nor do I at all doubt, but that Men may manage their luſts ſo, as that they may not

not be able to inferr reaſon enough to relinquiſh them from any influence they have upon their Wordly intereſt; or if any one ſhould think it neceſſary to purchaſe a pleaſure by the ſhortning of his life, or the leſſening of his Eſtate, I cannot ſee why he may not have reaſon on his ſide, for, *A ſhort life, and a merry one*; and, *My mind to me a Kingdom is*, would upon the former ſuppoſition, be wiſe Proverbs; for, upon this ſuppoſition, the pleaſure of the mind would be very narrow and faint, and the checks of Conſcience would be none, or inſignificant: But as the caſe ſtands now, (though there be *pleaſure* in *ſin*, and *deceitfulneſs* in *luſt*, granted in Scripture) to abandon the hopes of Heaven for ſome carnal pleaſures upon Earth, is like *Eſau*, to ſell his Birth-right for a Meſs of Pottage; and on the other hand, to renounce all preſent enjoyments for the ſake of Heaven, is like *Peter*, to forſake an old ſhatter'd Fiſher-boat, and broken Nets, a troubled Lake, and uncertain Hopes, for the aſſurance of a Crown and Kingdom, which is ſurely very reaſonable.

And now I paſs on to the ſecond thing and fifth *Chapter.*

CHAP. V.

Containing a fifth Motive to Holineſs, from the Nature of Vertue and Vice. Vertue renders man like, Vice unlike God. Thus Exemplified with reſpect to the Spirituality, Life, Power, Wiſdom, Goodneſs of God. Application of the whole.

Holineſs makes us like God; Sin unlike.

IN 1 *Ep. John* 1. this is ſet down as the great Meſſage which Chriſt came to acquaint the World with, that *God is light, and in him is no darkneſs at all*; and therefore they who walk in the light have fellowſhip with him, and they that walk in darkneſs have none; where it is plain, that St *John* founded the neceſſity of Holineſs in the Divine Nature; becauſe God is holy, therefore he muſt firſt renounce his own Nature, e'er he can eſtabliſh any Laws of a contrary Nature, or love or hate on any other condition, than Holineſs and Sin:

This

This being ſo, I think the beſt way to diſcover the nature of Vertue and Vice, is to conſider, how the one renders us like God, and the other unlike him.

The Account we have of the Nature of God, is, that he is a *Spirit of Eternal Life, Infinite Power, Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Juſtice* and *Truth*; theſe are the chief of his Attributes, and ſuch as Reaſon it ſelf acknowledges to be the higheſt perfections and excellencies imaginable: If Holineſs therefore tend to implant and improve ſome reſemblances of them in men, and Vice to efface and extinguiſh them, it will eaſily appear how the one makes us like God, and the other unlike him.

1. God *is a Spirit*; it is true, that Vertue and Vice do not change the ſubſtances of things, and make Spirit Fleſh or Fleſh Spirit; yet becauſe they do ſo wonderfully transform things, by inſtilling new Qualities, and ſo altering the operations of beings; they are in Scripture ſaid to do ſo: Thus becauſe Vertue raiſes and refines the Soul, frees it from thoſe Fogs which a ſenſual dotage caſts about it, ſcatters a new light upon it,

it, and mortifies thoſe affections which reign in the body, and renders it more obedient to the mind; ſo that the man lives the life of Faith, as becomes a wiſe and an immortal being, therefore it is ſaid in the language of the holy Ghoſt, to have rendred him a *ſpiritual man*: and on the other ſide, becauſe ſin doth ſtupifie and ſenſualize the mind, imbolden and pamper the body, ſo that the Soul ſeems to have chang'd its nature into fleſh, and reliſhes nothing of thoſe pleaſures which are properly ſpiritual, but is wholly taken up with thoſe enjoyments which are the proper and natural entertainments of fleſh and blood, not a ſpirit; therefore ſin is ſaid to have rendred the Man a *natural and carnal Man.*

2. *Eternal Life* is the ſecond Attribute of God; Life in Man, is either of the *Body*, or *Soul*; as to the former, Temperance, Employment, and a chearful ſpirit, are the great Preſervatives of Health, and the beſt ſupports of ſuch crazy beings as our bodies are: Religion injoyns the two former, for no Man can be holy without being temperate,

rate, and employ'd at leaſt in doing good, and it contributes very effectually to to the latter, *i. e.* cheerfulneſs of ſpirit, by begeting in us a peaceful Conſcience, a reſign'd mind and glorious hopes; but ſin ſhortens our haſty days, by expoſing us to diſeaſes, violence, the Law; and by the ill influence which a diſtemper'd mind hath upon the body; as to the *Soul*, Righteouſneſs is the life of it, it is the nouriſhment and pleaſure, the freedom and the ſecurity of it, but ſin is the death and plague of it. *Non eſt vivere, ſed valere vita*, It is not the meer exiſting, but the welfare and happineſs of a being which is its life; and if ſo, How can a Soul which is ſick of paſſions, daily tortur'd and diſtracted by an ill Conſcience, be ſaid to live? Beſides, ſin doth impair the faculties, o'ercaſt the light, and fetter the powers of the mind, ſo that it neither underſtands, nor wills, nor commands as it ought to do: it is rendred a poor, ſickly, deſpicable being, and therefore the ſinner is ſaid to be *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*, or at leaſt (becauſe the Metaphor is not to be preſſed too far, as appears from

from the Text following) if it hath any Life, it is as imperfect as that of a Lethargick drowſie body, all's a thick night and ſleep about it: Hence is the addreſs of the Spirit, *Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead*, Eph. 5. 4.

3. *Power* is the third Attribute of God; Religion promotes even this in us, by inſpiring the mind with courage, and by the addition of ſtrength conjoyn'd to it; Innocence makes a man bold as a Lion, it makes one dare and hope well, Religion is a confederacy with the Almighty, and he becomes the good Man's ſtrength, *Pſal.* 18. 1. & 19. 4. it creates an awe and reverence for him amongſt Men, and it makes him approach as near to ſelf-ſufficiency, as the ſtate of a Creature will let him; he is independent of the World, and hath not half the hopes, nor fears, nor cares, that the wicked Man hath; for this man hath an ill Conſcience, and is therefore timorous; he that fears not God, dreads every thing beſides; he hath many paſſions that are to be gratified, and therefore he is very dependent

dent on the World; he lives ill, and therefore is the ſcorn of Man, and the hate of God.

4. *Wiſdom*: The fear of God is the beginning of Wiſdom; and therefore this is eaſily prov'd, for Religion is nothing elſe but the knowledge of the moſt Excellent Truths, the contemplation of the moſt glorious Objects, and the hope of the moſt raviſhing Pleaſures, and the Practice of ſuch Duties as are moſt ſerviceable to our happineſs, and to our peace, our health, our honour, our proſperity, and our eternal welfare; but ſin, on the other hand beſots, and infatuates the man, it makes him paſſionate and fooliſh, conſult ill, and execute worſe; he is blind to the moſt glorious Truths, and hath no taſte or reliſh of thoſe glorious Objects of another World, and he lives as if he were in love with ruine; and though he ſee death and confeſs it in the way, he is ſpurr'd on by his paſſions, and dares not ſhun it; he covets mere trifles, vaniſhing fading pleaſures, mere apparitions and dreams of happineſs, and he flies from the real and ſubſtantial

delights

delights and ſatisfactions that would never have an end; he trembles where no fear is, and yet is ſteeled and ſenſeleſs againſt Almighty Vengeance; and if this be not to be fooliſh, I know not what is.

The fifth and laſt now is *Goodneſs*, by which I mean kindneſs, and ſerviceableneſs to others; this Religion ſo far advances, that each Man is ſo far Chriſtian as he is thus good; this goodneſs or love is the mere ſubſtance of the Goſpel; ſo that where-ever the Spirit of Chriſtianity hath planted it ſelf, the man is not only juſt, but good and kind, he doth not only put off revenge, and frowardneſs and hardheartedneſs, but he puts on the contrary Vertues, Meekneſs, Tenderneſs, Charity; his goods and life are not too dear a price to pay for the welfare of a Brother; but ſin, on the quite contrary, arms one Man againſt another, and ſows nothing but diſſention and ruin amongſt mankind; injuſtice, cruelty, rapine, murther, covetouſneſs, hardheartedneſs, are the Characters which conſtitute a ſinner.

Juſtice

Juſtice and *Truth*, which are Divine Attributes, are as eſſential parts of Holineſs, as Goodneſs, and therefore need not be ſpoken to.

Thus you ſee how Vertue and Holineſs perfect and exalt the Man, how it makes him more ſpiritual, gives him power, life, wiſdom, goodneſs, allies him to the Angels, and makes him like God, but ſin defaces all thoſe Excellencies, makes him a mere heap of Rubbiſh and Ruins, a ſilly empty Creature, that the Spirit might well ſay of ſuch, *Rev.* 3. 17. *That they are wretched and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked:* And who can now look upon ſin as a little harmleſs indifferent thing? He that ſhould rob the ambitious Man of his Honour, the covetous of his Wealth, the vain perſon of his trifling gaity, ſhould be thought to have committed an unpardonable offence againſt them, and yet ſure power, and wiſdom, and goodneſs, are things of far greater Excellency than wealth, or honour, or gaity; they are the Attributes of God, the things that make him God, and when he pleaſes to communicate and impart

impart to his Creatures ſome, though ſlender portions of theſe, What can be a more fatal Enemy to the Creature, than that ſin which ſpoils and rifles him of theſe? he that ſhould ſtab the body, and through as many gaſhes as thoſe of *Cæſar* in the Senate, let out the impriſon'd Soul, commits no Murther like that of ſin, which queneches in Man the ſpiritual life, and robs him of Eternity. O my Soul, doth every intemperate draught, every ſenſual pleaſure, quench the light and damp the ſpirit within me, and yet ſhall I ſtill go on! Is it ſo inconſiderable a loſs to change from Spirit into Fleſh? Do all my ſinful paſſions for this World, Ambition, Covetouſneſs, Dotage, deface all Power, Wiſdom and Good neſs in me, and make me weak and wicked, impotent and fooliſh, and yet ſhall I ſtill go on to dote? Is it ſo little deſirable to be like God? It is ſo inconconſiderable a change, like the unhappy Angels, to fall from light to darkneſs? forgive me, O my God, I now begin to ſee a horrour in my ſins, I ſee its poiſonous nature, and the mighty wounds it gives, and I will ſhun it hereafter more than

than Death and Ruine, more than the Sword, the Plague, or Famine; for I am well convinc'd that there is nothing ſo excellent as Spiritnal Life, Peace, Power, Wiſdom and Goodneſs, and nothing can wound or blaſt theſe but ſin.

And if, Secondly, Life and Goodneſs, Power and Wiſdom are ſuch excellent things, How dear muſt they be to God? and how contradictory to his Will muſt be all thoſe Methods which men take to deface them? and this he hath ſufficiently taught, in that he hath thought it worthy the Incarnation, Life and Paſſion of his own Son to root out and baniſh iniquity and tranſgeſſion from the Earth, being things contradictory to his Nature, and to his Deſign too in the Creation.

From all this you ſee, that Holineſs is agreeable to the Divine Nature, Sin is contradictory to it, and by conſequence that he who works Righteouſneſs is born of God, and he who commits ſin is of the Devil; and that it is as neceſſary to be really holy, as it is to be in the

favour of God, for he cannot love the unholy, unleſs he can renounce his own Nature.

The Prayer.

O *Thou God* who art light, and in whom there is no darkneſs at all, *a holy and pure Spirit! how infinitely are the Sons of Men obliged to thee, that thou haſt given them* Immortal Spirits, *and doſt travel by the Word and Spirit to form and faſhion them into thy glorious* Image, *to make them ſhare in thy* Perfection, *that they may do ſo in thy* Happineſs *too*; *O grant that I may hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, that I may labour day and night*; *to water and improve thoſe* Reſemblances *of thy Divine Perfections which thou haſt imparted to me by thy Spirit, that ſo I may, through Chriſt, increaſe in* favour *with* God and Man; *and grant that I may abhor thoſe ſins which* efface *thy Image, and* debaſe *my Nature, which render me a* burthen *to my ſelf, the* hate *of God, and* ſcorn *of Man! which make me* unhappy *here, and* miſerable *hereafter*; *Grant this, I beſeech thee,*

thee, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

CHAP. VI.

Containing the ſixth Motive to Holineſs, the Aſſiſtance of the Divine Spirit.

I Do not think, that in a Diſcourſe of this practical Nature, it will behove me to enter into any Diſpute about the *ſtrengths of laps'd Nature*, about the *nature* and *neceſſity* of *Supernatural Grace*; I may, in ſhort, affirm, That we find in Scripture ſometimes the *birth*, ſometimes the *growth*, ſometimes the *perfection* of the New creature, aſſign'd to the Holy Spirit, as the great *Author* of it; all which doth not yet diſcharge Man from the neceſſity of exerting all the *ſtrength* and *endeavour* that he can; for by thoſe frequent Exhortations addreſs'd to Man, we may juſtly inferr ſome *ability* ſuppos'd in him; and by the frequent promiſes of the aſſiſtance of the Divine Spirit, we may as reaſonably inferr an *impotence* which ſtands in need of this relief: and from all together we may

conclude, that the Spirit of God is ſo far forth diſpens'd, as ſerves the *end* of the Goſpel, and the *neceſſities* of mankind.

Our bleſſed Saviour, after he had deliver'd upon the Mount a Syſtem of the moſt refined Precepts of Devotion and Purity, Mortification and Charity, as if he had foreſeen, that his Hearers would be dazled by the *brightneſs* of this Divine Image, and look upon the Pattern as too high for the attainments of *Human Nature*, doth cloſe the diſcourſe, Firſt, with an aſſurance of a *Supernatural aſſiſtance* of the ſpirit of God: And then, Secondly, with aſſerting the neceſſity of a *real* and *actual conformity* of our lives to thoſe holy Precepts, *Matt. 7. v. 7*, &c. *Ask and it ſhall be given you; ſeek, and ye ſhall find; knock, and it ſhall be open'd unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that ſeeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh, it ſhall be open'd:* Where our *Endeavours*, and the *Divine Aſſiſtance* are joyn'd together, as being both neceſſary towards the great Work of Sanctification; in the 9, 10, 11 *verſes*, he

he goes on to confirm them in the belief of this Promiſe, from the example of *Natural Parents*, who, though evil, have that natural affection for their Children, that if *a Son ask bread, they will not give him a ſtone; or if he ask a Fiſh, they will not give him a Scorpion:* Much more is it inconſiſtent with the *goodneſs* of the Divine Nature, to refuſe Man that aſſiſtance which is indiſpenſibly neceſſary to the propagation of Holineſs; inconſiſtent with his *Paternity*, to deny his craving Children that which is as neceſſary to their *ſpiritual* life, as food is to their *natural: If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts to your Children, how much more ſhall your Father which is in Heaven give good things* (his Holy Spirit, as appears from parallel places) *to them that ask him?*

And when he had acquainted them with this, I do not wonder that he concludes all with averring the *neceſſity of Obedience* to all thoſe excellent Precepts, from verſe 13. to the end; for in vain do Men quarrel at the purity of the Chriſtian Doctrine, as if it were a Religion fit for Angels rather than Men;

in vain do they complain of the prevailing paſſions of fleſh and blood, and of the ſoft inſinuations of a flattering World: our ability to obey the Goſpel, is not to be meaſur'd by the ſtrength of *Nature*, but of the *Spirit*; that God, who hath call'd us to the profeſſion of ſuch *Exalted Vertue*, hath allotted us an *aſſiſtance ſuitable* to ſo glorious an end; ſo that theſe complaints are not the groans of a *Penitent*, but the excuſes of a *fond* and *carnal mind*.

All this certainly amounts to a very clear proof of the *Neceſſity* and *Excellency* of Real and Inherent Holineſs; for to what purpoſe ſhould we call down an aſſiſtance from Heaven? To what purpoſe ſhould the Divine Spirit be powred forth upon Men, if either there were no *need*, or no *uſe* of ſuch a Holineſs, which he is the Divine Principle of; or if this Holineſs were ſo impure and imperfect, that it were not acceptable to God thorough Chriſt?

And which way now ſhall the impenitent ſinner eſcape Divine Juſtice? What Excuſe can he frame for the defence

fence of his Impiety? he ſins and dies, not becauſe he *cannot* do otherwiſe, but becauſe he *will* do ſo: he periſheth not through *impotence*, but *obſtinacy*; and what puniſhment, think we, can ſufficiently avenge a *contempt of*, or *deſpight done* to the Spirit of God? The *Gentile* is unexcuſable, becauſe he did not obey thoſe Laws which his *Conſcience* did dictate to him, though the Characters they were publiſhed in were dark, the Motives to, and the Principles of his Obedience, weak and feeble, at leaſt comparatively; What tribulation, and wrath and anguiſh then will puniſh our diſobedience, who have not only our duty openly *publiſhed* by the Son of God, and inforc'd upon our hopes and fears by *glorious promiſes* and *dreadful threats*, but alſo the Spirit of God promis'd to *enlighten* our underſtandings, to *enfranchiſe* and *ſtrengthen* our wills, to imprint the Motives of the Goſpel in more ſenſible Characters on our ſpirits? We muſt expect that our *tribulation* in the World to come will be proportion'd to our *obſtinacy* in this, and the Anger of Almighty wrath will boil to a heat anſwerable

ſwerable to that infinite love and goodneſs we have deſpiſed.

The Prayer.

O *My God, how reaſonable is it that I ſhould obey thee, ſince thou commandeſt me nothing but what thou giveſt me ſtrength to perform! I feel the* weakneſs *of my Nature, and the* ſtrength *of Temptations, but this ſhall never diſcourage me; through the might of thy Spirit I ſhall be ſure to conquer; it muſt be a* weakneſs *indeed which* Omnipotence *cannot relieve; it muſt be a ſtrange* aſſault *made by the* World, *which can ſtorm that Fort which the* Spirit of the *Almighty defends; and that Law muſt be more than Seraphick, which is exalted above the imitation of a Soul inſpir'd and actuated by thee: No, no, if thou vouchſafeſt but one Ray of thine Infinite Power, I ſhall ſoon ſubdue the World, and mortifie the Fleſh; I ſhall do the things which pleaſe thee here, and I ſhall obtain everlaſting life afterwards; which grant for thy Mercies ſake, and thy Son Chriſt Jeſus ſake.*

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Goſpel-Covenant, as it is a Motive to Holineſs. 1. *The tender of pardon to the penitent prevents deſpair.* 2. *'Tis a ſtrong Engagement upon us to love God.*

THE Covenant of Works was, *Do this, and live*; Life was the reward of an *unerring* obedience, and Death the puniſhment of every tranſgreſſion of the Law; ſo that by virtue of this Covenant none could expect to be Juſtified, but he who had no ſin to be charged with; and therefore ſince there never was any ſuch Man but Chriſt, *Righteouſneſs could not be by the Law*, but now the Covenant of Grace is, *Believe, and Repent*, and *you ſhall be ſaved*; our ſins cannot exclude us from Heaven, if we forſake them for the time to come, and relie upon the Mercy of God thorough the Blood of Chriſt; for he died to this purpoſe, *that every one which believeth in him, might not periſh, but have everlaſting life*: Which Mercy

The difference of the two Covenants.

Mercy extends it ſelf, not only to the ſins which *precede* Converſion, but to thoſe alſo which *follow* it, as I have before prov'd: Now the reſult of all this is, p. 76.

1. That the overture of pardon incourages us to repentance.

2. That the ſenſe of the love and goodneſs of God, obliges us to love and obey him.

The Tender of Pardon a Motive to Holineſs.

1. The overture of Pardon, *&c.* Deſpair clips the wings, and cramps the vigour of the Souls; no man would be good, if he knew it were to no purpoſe to be ſo; For why ſhould he deny his ſenſual ſatisfactions, if he could expect no fruits of his Mortification: But when the Almighty makes a tender of Mercy, and invites the ſinner to be reconciled, what will not *he* do who is ſenſible of the advantage of his favour, or the dreadfulneſs of his anger, that he may avoid the one, and gain the other! The trouble of a wounded Conſcience is an uneaſie thing to bear, and who would not rid himſelf of it, and poſſeſs his Soul of an entire peace, when he ſees that he may? Who can be willing to be all

all his life in *bondage*, who may be tranſlated into the glorious *liberty* of the Sons of God? who would feed the ſlaviſh fears of an approaching Death in his Boſom, who may extinguiſh and expell them if he will! Salvation is not ſo inconſiderable a matter, but that every one makes this naturally his enquiry, *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* and therefore when to do ones beſt is to do all? and to be ſorry for our ſins, is to atone them, (in the acceptance of God) who would ſlight the happineſs of the Divine Favour, and Heaven, tendered upon theſe terms? O my Saviour! *thou haſt indeed brought Life and Immortality to light, thou haſt freed me from the curſe of the Law*, and thou haſt open'd a plain and eaſie way to Reconciliation and Heaven, thorough thy Body upon the Croſs; without this, the Contemplation of God's *Juſtice* would have o'erthrown all thoſe hopes which I could have deriv'd from the Contemplation of his *Mercy and Goodneſs*, and I could never, without an affront to his *Holineſs*, have flatter'd my ſelf from his *Clemency* into the hopes of pardon, for thoſe numerous

merous ſins I have committed againſt my Conſcience: For ever bleſſed be thy name, that thou haſt taken the weight and burthen of my ſins upon thee! that thou haſt *ſuffer'd*, that I might be juſtified through thy Blood: I will no longer *deliberate* whether I ſhall eaſe me of my ſins and guilt, whether I ſhall be *happy* or no! I come, I come, bleſſed Lord, I renounce all the ſins and vanities of my former life, and deſire to devote my ſelf *a holy living, and acceptable Sacrifice to God* for the time to come! For why ſhould I any longer ſin againſt ſo much love and goodneſs?

God's Love manifeſted in the Covenant of Grace, a motive to Holineſs.

§. 2. *That the ſenſe of the love and goodneſs of God obliges us to love and obey him*, &c. When I had broken the Laws of God, and given manifeſt affronts to that glorious Being, who created, and doth preſerve me; when I had trampled upon all his Obligations, and abus'd all his Mercies into wantonneſs, without any temptation to it, beſides the baſeneſs of my own Nature, I might have expected that a juſt Wrath would have reveal'd itſelf in Thunder and

and Lightning, in Judgments and Death; but inſtead of that, he continues the overtures of his Mercy, and Courts me with the tenderneſs of an indulgent Father: O my God, thou haſt conquer'd me by thy patience and long-ſuffering, thou haſt taken me by thy infinite love and goodneſs, I adore thy Clemency and Wiſdom, and am aſham'd of the wildneſs and extravagancy of my own folly! O pardon me, and my mourning and revenge ſhall witneſs what reſentments I have of thy ſweetneſs and tenderneſs; I will ſerve and love thee much, becauſe thou haſt forgiven me much. ——Farewel my ſloth and eaſe, I have devoted my ſelf to my great Creator, and I muſt redeem the time that I have ſpent amiſs.——Farewel my ſinful pleaſures, and my vain diverſions, I will no longer indulge that body which hath betray'd my God, which hath made me a Rebel againſt a gracious Father! Farewel my ambitious and vain glorions aims, theſe are not the Ornaments which become an *Humble Penitent*.

Theſe and ſuch like Reſolutions, are, I think, the natural reſults of a ſerious con-

conſideration of the Divine Goodneſs, manifeſted in this Covenant of Grace; no man can believe himſelf in a capacity of Pardon and Salvation, but he muſt naturally deſire to be rid of thoſe fears which accompany his guilts, and to be ſecur'd of Heaven; no man can ſee the Majeſty of Heaven contending for conqueſt over us by love and goodneſs, but he muſt bluſh at his ingratitude, and melt at the ſenſe of the Stupendious Mercy.

The Prayer.

O *Glorious God, grant that theſe may be the effects of my knowledge of thy Covenant of Grace; that thy goodneſs may lead me to Repentance, and that I may not, by the contempt of thy Mercy, treaſure up to my ſelf wrath againſt the day of Wrath: Lord, What ſhould make* me *backward, if* thou *art forward to a Reconciliation! What ſhould make* me *refuſe thy pardon, when* thou *art willing to beſtow it? Is it not worth my while to be ſav'd? Or can I be ſav'd in deſpight of God? Lord, I cannot be ſo blind to think*

think ſo ; grant me then the Grace to repent to day *whilſt it is called to day, to mind the things which belong to my peace, before they are hid from mine eyes.* Amen, Amen, *bleſſed Jeſus.*

And now I have finiſhed the ſecond part of this Diſcourſe, and conſider'd all, or at leaſt the main Motives to Holineſs which the Goſpel contains, nothing is here wanting, that can juſtly beget our *love* or *hate*, nothing wanting that can work upon our *hopes* or *fears*, nothing more to be deſired which can *invite* or *incourage* us ; all the Arguments of *intereſt* and *pleaſure*, of *neceſſity* and *poſſibility*, of *obligations* and *duty*, are here combin'd and twiſted, to make the Cords that ſhould draw us ſtrong enough, that one might juſtly wonder how any Man can reſiſt the power of ſuch Arguments, and how it is poſſible to be damn'd.

And yet we cannot ſee what effect Chriſtianity hath upon the generality of Mankind ; they are as *looſe* as *Heathens*, as *covetous* as *Jews*, and in a word, as much addicted to the *pleaſures of the world and fleſh*, as if neither Life and Immor-

Immortality had been brought to light, nor there were any promiſes of Supernatural aſſiſtance.

It will become us therefore, in the Third Place, to enquire into the reaſon of this, and to diſcover thoſe Temptations which detain Men captive to ſin, notwithſtanding all the Son of God hath done to redeem them.

Practical

Practical Christianity.

PART III.

Of Temptations to Sin, and their remedies.

CHAP. I.

Of Pleasure consider'd as a Temptation. 1. The boundaries of Sensual Pleasure. 2. Remedies against it. 3. Motives to abstinence, where the emptiness of sensuality is fully demonstrated, from the nature of worldly possessions and of Man.

THE Temptations to Sin are very numerous, yet they may be reduc'd to two Heads, *Pleasure* and *Pain*; for these are the great Springs of *Love* and *Hate*, of *Hope* and *Fear*, and consequently of all Humane *actions*. I will begin with *Pleasure*.

Pleaſure is the Idol of Mankind, and not without reaſon, for it is impoſſible to love our *ſelves*, and not love our *pleaſure*; and never any Man denied himſelf yet any the leaſt portion of it, but in order to a greater; therefore though I firſt premiſe, *That he cannot be a true Chriſtian, who is not willing to forego all his preſent enjoyments for the hopes of Heaven*; becauſe it is inconſiſtent with a true *Faith* of the things not ſeen, but yet *eternal*, to preferr theſe temporal ones, becauſe *ſeen* before them; and inconſiſtent with the truth of our *love* to God, to obey him no longer than he commands *pleaſant* things: Yet becauſe a miſperſwaſion about this matter may prove a *ſnare* and a *burthen* to ſome in the practice of Religion, and deterr others from it, I will enquire,

1. How far Religion is an Enemy to our Senſual Pleaſures.

2. What Remedies it preſcribes againſt them.

3. What Motives it lays down to Abſtinence.

Pleaſure, how far forbid.

Sect. 1. How far Religion, *&c.* As to thoſe *inſtances* of enjoyments which are

are forbidden, the caſe is plain; all *unnatural* luſts are Species of pleaſure (if they may deſerve that name) utterly interdicted the Chriſtian.

As to our *degrees* of enjoyment, in all the inſtances of pleaſure which are allowed us, (and ſuch are all our natural appetites) it is firſt plain, that all kind of *exceſs* is forbidden us; and in this ſenſe the Precepts of the Goſpel are generally to be underſtood; the Body we are to mortifie is deſcribed to have ſuch members as theſe, *Col.* 3. 5. *Fornication, uncleanneſs, inordinate affection, evil concupiſcence, and covetouſneſs, which is Idolatry*;— and to walk after the way of the *Gentiles*, or according to the World, is *to have our converſation in laſciviouſneſs, luſts, exceſs of wine, revellings, banquetings*, which is called afterwards *exceſs of Riot*, 1 *Pet.* 4. 3, 4.

2. It is not to be queſtion'd but that the great deſign of Religion, is to raiſe our hearts upwards, to make us ſpiritually minded; and therefore all Senſuality, which is contrary to this, is contrary to the Analogy of the Goſpel; and by conſequence, I humbly conceive, that

an *immoderate love* of any thing, though an allowed inſtance of Pleaſure, is contrary to the Goſpel of our Lord; accordingly I find, that that enjoyment of this preſent Life which it permits to us, is ſuch a one as is *cool* and *moderate*, not *warm* and *Paſſionate*: 1 Cor. 7. 29. *But this I ſay, Brethren, the time is ſhort; it remains, that both they that have Wives, be as though they had none, and they that weep, as though they wept not, and they that rejoyce, as though they rejoyced not, and they that buy, as though they poſſeſs'd not, and they that uſe this World, as not abuſing it, for the Faſhion of this World paſſeth away.* ——— And now,

3. By conſequence, whatever tends to the betraying of us into *exceſs* or *dotage*, is unlawful, conſiderer'd purely as the means to ſuch an End. From hence we may learn, how little injurious Religion is to mens preſent pleaſures; we are allowed all things but *dotage*, *unnatural luſts*, and *exceſs*, and all theſe are contradictory to our preſent happineſs; as for *exceſs*, and *unnatural* luſt, there's no queſtion; as for *dotage*, whoever

ver ſhall conſider the emptineſs and uncertainty of this World, muſt needs conclude, that the greateſt ſecurity of our pleaſure is a moderate affection; and bating now all theſe, the Goſpel of Chriſt is ſo far from enjoyning us miſery and trouble, that we are expreſly invited to it, by this Motive amongſt others, That *it hath the Promiſes of this life, as well as that which is to come*; and we are permitted to look upon *peace* and *proſperity* as great bleſſings, and we are allowed the delight of Friendly *Converſation*, love without hypocriſie, and to love our Wives even as our ſelves. So that whatever is neceſſary to make our lives comfortable, is not only permitted, but promiſed us; but if we would make this *Earth* our *Heaven*, 'tis this that is to be Senſual and Carnal, it is eaſie to apply theſe Rules to our Cloathing, Eating, Drinking, Converſation, *&c.* and they will make us wiſe and prudent Chriſtians, and Religion will appear pleaſant and delightful.

There is one more limit affix'd to our enjoyments, and that is by *Charity*; we muſt take care our ſatisfactions, by

our examples, do not betray or tempt others; Brotherly affection is not very hot in his breaſt, who rather than deny himſelf any little liberty, will contribute to the damnation of his Neighbour.

Remedies againſt Senſuality.

2. The Remedies againſt pleaſure.

1. A *looſe* and a *diſſolute* ſpirit, a gay and inconſiderate temper, is that which commonly betrays us into exceſs and vanity, into ſoftneſs and dotage; and therefore Religion endeavours to poſſeſs our Souls with *ſobriety* and *awe* by the *preſence* of a *holy God*, by the *Judgment to come*, by the *value* and *preciouſneſs* of our Souls, and the manifold *dangers* and *enemies* they are *incompaſſed* by; and therefore ingages us to paſs the time of our ſojourning in fear, to walk circumſpectly, to be upon our guard, and watch always.

2. Becauſe the Body is apt to grow wanton, it preſcribes us *Watchings*, *Faſts*, and frequent *Prayers*, as the great Inſtruments that do moſt tame and mortifie it, and at the ſame time improve and exalt the mind.

Beſides

Beſides theſe, that I may at once conquer my Pleaſures, and live pleaſantly too, I have drawn theſe our Rules from the Scripture.

1. I never frame to my ſelf *Rich Idea's*, nor fancy I know what Heaven is in any object, but am content with an indifferent pleaſure, and hope for no more than what befits mankind in this ſtate on earth.

2. I train up my ſelf to *endure hardſhip as a good Souldier of Jeſus Chriſt*, by paſſing through ſome choſen difficulties by checking even a lawful Paſſion, by calling off my humour from too much freedom, and by accuſtoming my outward man to endure reſtraints and diſcipline; and thus my temper grows ſtrong, aud my mind ſtanch and firm.

3. I obſerve that the Herd which aims at a ſenſual Pleaſure, either ſeldom meets it, (and what a miſery is it to be damn'd for Luſts that are never ſatisfied) or elſe they know not how to uſe it, or they are ſo ſoft and unmanly, they droop in every interval wherein they want it; and therefore I compoſe my ſelf on the quite contrary, to meet a

Storm, and to Stem the Tide, and to arrive at my Port through boiſterous Seas; and ſo a ſmall Blaſt doth not *move* me, a great one doth not *ſink* me, and a Calm, like an unexpected bleſſing, is received the more *thankfully*, and us'd the more *moderately*.

4. I labour that my Converſation may be above, and I endeavour to look beyond this dark Horizon, and expect the breaking forth of the Sun of Righteouſneſs. Sometimes in my Contemplation I die, and ſtrip my ſelf of all, and bid farewel to my deareſt Friends, and my fancy wraps my Body in its Winding Sheet, and wafts my Soul to God, and I enter as far as I can into Heaven, and I dwell there; and ſo the taſte of another World, like the eating of *Manna*, makes my Palate too nice for the Garlick and Onions of *Egypt*.

tives to con- y Pleaſure.

Sect. 3. The great motives of the Goſpel, whereby we are encourag'd to deſpiſe worldly pleaſures, are—

1. The *Love of God*, manifeſted in his loving us, and in the ſending his own Son into the World for our ſakes, that we might be the Sons of God: whence

whence the Apoſtles every where inferr, *That the Love of God ſhould conſtrain us to obey him*, as Dear Children, and Sons of the moſtHigh God; and conſequently, not to walk as thoſe who know not God, in the luſts of the Fleſh, and the faſhions of the World; but being renewed in the ſpirit of our minds, to pleaſe him in holineſs and purity —— and the inexpreſſible *Love* of the *Bleſſed Jeſus* dying for us on the Croſs, will not ſuffer us to be guilty of ſuch a baſeneſs, as to betray him at the ſollicitation of a ſenſual Luſt; and that *Bleſſed Spirit* of Love, which dwells in the Children of Obedience, is quenched and grieved by carnal Luſts, and therefore they muſt deny all impurity, that the Lord may delight to live amongſt them. Nothing will ſeem difficult to us, if we but conſider theſe things, the *majeſty* of God, and the *vanity* of Man, the *height* of his Love, and *imperfection* of Man's Obedience.

2. Our own *Excellency*. We are the *Temple* of the *Holy Spirit*; we are the *Children* of the living *God*, the *Children* of *Light*, the *Purchaſe* of the *Blood* of *Chriſt*,

Chriſt, the *delight of God*, and the *care* of *Angels*, and ſhall we wallow in bruti∫h Luſts, like thoſe who have no *knowledge*, no *hopes*?

3. Our *Reward here and hereafter*, *Joy*, and *Peace*, and *Hope*, do conſtantly dwell in that Soul which works Righteouſneſs, and continues in Patience and Well-doing; and can any of the fulſome pleaſures of the Body be compar'd to the calm and tranſport of a holy Soul; and yet theſe are but imperfect dawnings of an eternal Day, there are things laid up for thoſe who love God, which the heart cannot conceive, nor the tongue expreſs; and theſe precious promiſes muſt needs enable us to live above the corruption which is in the World through Luſt —.

So that now, though the Pleaſures which Chriſtians are commanded to renounce were very *full* and *ſatisfactory*, yet the love of God who enjoyns this Abſtinence, the love of Jeſus who ſuffer'd for us, and the love of that Spirit which is tender'd in the Goſpel to purifie our minds, and fill them with delight and pleaſure, would render our compliance

compliance with theſe Commands very *reaſonable* and *eaſie*; and if we add the conſideration of the *peace* and *ſatisfaction* which flow from an entire Mortication, and the glorious Promiſes which are annex'd to it, it will be almoſt impoſſible to reſiſt the united force of ſuch Powerful Arguments; and how much more if we conſider ——

4. The *emptineſs* and *vanity* of all thoſe pleaſures by which the ſinner is inſnar'd. The World hath nothing in it which is truly great and ſatisfactory; its moſt exquiſite entertainments are ſtrangely *empty*, *mixt*, and *alloyed*, and *fleeting*.

1. *Empty*. Every man's practice is a daily confeſſion of this; for how taking ſoever a pleaſure may appear in *fancy* and *proſpect*, yet 'tis common, that men ſoon diſreliſh what they enjoy, and *diſdain* what they *poſſeſs*; and if men daily change and contrive new Pleaſures, is it not a plain confeſſion of being diſſatisfied with the old? And what ſhall the poor Epicure do, if Enjoyment it ſelf prove fatal? is it not an evident proof that the choice is fooliſh, the object empty,

empty, the faculties weak, and the World a cheat? it were eaſie to prove this, if I ſhould ruu o'er particulars. What is *Greatneſs*? it is ſo much nothing I know not what it is, it is a ſlippery height, it is a glorious ſlavery, a pretty pageantry, and fantaſtick formality: What is *Wealth*? this ſhould not be reckon'd as an Enjoyment, 'tis but the mean to one. What is *Luſt*, but an outrageous ferment of the bloud, a ſudden mutiny of ſpirits? it is a ſudden blaze that flaſhes and then dies; the delicacy and flavour of *Meats* and *Drinks* is ſcarcely perceptible to moſt, it is ſo much nothing; *Gaity* of *Attire* is the pleaſure only of Children and of Fools, it is an *imaginary* prettineſs.

Pleaſure ſpringing from Fancy conſider'd.

But the truth on't is, pleaſure here below is not to be meaſur'd by the weight and ſubſtance of the *Objects*, but by the quickneſs and ſtrength of *Fancy* or *Imagination*; for 'tis with Men as 'tis with Children, 'tis not the *Rattle* or the *Toy*, but 'tis the ſillineſs of the fancy which creates the pleaſure; and therefore I'll conſider this a little: If the Imagination be childiſh, nice and fond, it frames

frames and creates art and delicacy in the object, and begets paſſions tender, impotent and warm; poſſeſſion now (one would fancy) would certainly make one thus qualified happy; but the miſchief on't is, this ſtrength of imagination belongs only to a *raw unexperienc'd* ſinner, who admires what he never try'd; like a man come into a new World, the *ſtrangeneſs* only begets the wonder; ſucceſs will make him unhappy: when he hath try'd all objects, he will find all but *vanity*; for as ſoon as Experience hath defeated him of the Imagination, it robs him of the Pleaſure too, and a weather-beaten ſinner derives his temptation only at laſt from cuſtom, and he ſins not ſo much becauſe 'tis pleaſant, as becauſe he is us'd to do ſo: This is the whole ſtate of the caſe, Imagination and Fancy is the Pleaſure; not Enjoyment; and *that* cannot laſt without *this*, nor with it.

But beſides, there is ſuch an uneaſineſs accompanies a violent deſire of any thing that it more than puniſheth the pretty pleaſures which fancy frames: hear a man eſſaying to diſcover what he feels,

feels, and he'll expreſs his Paſſions, by flames and fevers, wounds and diſeaſes, pleaſing ſmarts, and killing pleaſures, ſo *ſick* are they of their Paſſions, and *languiſh* of their Deſires, and *die* of Enjoyment; 'tis in all pleaſures as in thoſe of eating and drinking, the painful appetites of hunger and thirſt fore-run them, and feeding and drikinng extinguiſh the *appetite* and *pleaſure* too! This is the caſe of thoſe who pretend to the greateſt *gallantry* and *wit* in the choice and contrivance of their ſins; what ſhall we think of thoſe who drudge for baſer metals and more dreggy courſe vices; the toilſome pleaſures of Gluttony and Drunkenneſs, of Pride and Covetuouſneſs; the malicious pleaſures of Frowardneſs, Faction and Diſobedience? Surely theſe are worſe than vanity: the Soul of man muſt be *light* and *airy*, and *ſilly* and *unbalaſted*, e'er it can pleaſe it ſelf in the Imaginary Charms of Honour, and Command, and Beauty; but it muſt be baſe and earthly, degenerous and ſottiſh, e'er it can be taken by theſe. *Emptineſs* were enough to deterr our purſuit; but beſides,

2. There

2. There is an *alloy* and *mixture* in this World which renders it very vain: The face of our fortunes here below is like that of waters, which the winds have curled and ſhriveled; you can ſcarce diſcern the little ſmoothneſſes for the numerous ſwellings: though Enjoyment be the ſinners aim, it is the leaſt part of his portion; for beſides the *croſs accidents* which befal things, and the *inconſtancy of humours* on which pleaſure depends, the ſinner himſelf lodges in his boſom a whole Legion of mutinous Luſts, which (though the off-ſpring of the ſame Parent,) do oppoſe and deſtroy one another; *Love* will not give way to the *Intrigues* and *Fatigue* of buſie *Ambition*, nor *Ambition* ſtoop to the *ſoftneſs* and *lazineſs* of *Love*; *Covetouſneſs* will not admit of the *waſt* and *prodagality of Luſt*, nor *Luſt* comply with the *ſeverities*, and *ſtinginеſs*, and *drudgery* of *Covetouſneſs*; a great Fortune's neceſſary to ſupport great Sins, and yet our Sins lay waſte our Fortune; our Health is neceſſary to ſenſual pleaſure, and yet our ſenſual Pleaſures undermine our Health, and thus the change of Things and Humours,

mours, and the contradiction of Luſts, makes the ſinner's Life a ſtrange mixture of *Deſires* and *Diſappointments*, of *Purſuits* and *Repentances*; and after all, ſuppoſe the beſt we can,

3. Our Pleaſures are extreamly *tranſient*; *the faſhion of this world paſſeth away*, every thing is in continual flux and change; and what pleaſes moſt commonly takes wing firſt; for the height and perfection of every thing conſiſt in ſuch a point, that Nature ſeems rather to be ſtill aſcending to it, or declining from it, than ſtanding ſtill in it: But if the *World* were *conſtant*, we *our ſelves* are not; our Temper daily alters, and our Fancies are ſeldom the ſame to day which they were yeſterday; and how can our pleaſures be conſtant, when, though their Object continue *lovely*, we cannot promiſe our ſelves that we can *love* them *long*?

We may therefore thus ſtate our whole account, *Time* is but a moment to *Eternity*, *Life* but a moment in *Time*, and *Enjoyment* fills up but a very moment in *Life*: Lord, what a trifle and *nothing* is *that* which we prefer to an *Eternity of Bliſs*!

Thus

Thus I have conſider'd the Nature of the World (which contains the Objects of enjoyment) to diſcover the Nature of Pleaſure, it will be proper to conſider,

Humane Nature not form'd for ſenſual Pleaſure.

2. Our *own Nature*, who enjoy: for this will give us farther light into the nature of ſenſual Pleaſure! And here,

1. That Ray of *Reaſon* and *Wiſdom* which is ſhed upon the Soul is a meer check and reſtraint to our Senſualities, and renders the pleaſures of the Body in *Man* leſs pure and entire than in Children and Beaſts: and he that hath any greatneſs or Wiſdom in his mind, ſins with the uneaſineſs that the Learned and the Great feel when they deſcend to play the fool; they ſcorn their own eaſineſs, and are aſham'd of their pleaſures.

Our *Fancies* I have ſpoken to.

Our *Senſes* are narrow, ſcanty things, they can enjoy but a *little*, and but for a *moment*; Let our Fortune be wide and large as it will, our enjoyment can be no larger than our Senſes; we may if we pleaſe, ſtudy variety of Objects, but all the while we only *change* often and *poſſeſs* but little, for ſuch is the na-

ture of our ſcanty Organs, we can never enjoy a *new* pleaſure without quitting the *old*, *i. e.* without loſing as much as we gain. Our change of Humours is unaccountable, we are often ſullen and froward, and know not why; and then like Children we quarrel with our toys, and tear and throw away the bawbles which we doted on.

Bleſſed God! that ever rational men ſhould forfeit Heaven and incurr a Hell for ſuch a mixt uncertain ſtate of empty pleaſures as this! Could we like *Moſes* climb ſome Mountain, and arrive within ken of *Canaan*, with what regret, and ſhame, and ſcorn, ſhould we look down upon the dull pleaſures of Earth! Well doth the Holy Spirit deſcribe the Slaves of Sin to be blind and ſleepy, dead and ſenſeleſs things; for we need but open our eyes, and ſee through all that paint and varniſh that mocks and deludes the fancy; we need but be *Wiſe*, and we ſhall be *Holy* too, for if we but once *underſtand* the World we cannot but *deſpiſe* it.

5. *The conſideration of what our ſinful pleaſures ſtand us in*; they are too

too

too dear a purchaſe without the conſideration of the Life to come. They diſtemper and decay the *Body*; they exhauſt our Eſtates, and blaſt our Reputations; they are the Furies which haunt and diſquiet us with *Deſires* and *Jealouſies*, *Deſpight*, and *Anger*, and *Vexation*. They diſſever the cloſeſt *Unions* and the deareſt *Friendſhips*: They rob us of the more manly ſatisfactions of *doing Good*, of being *Wiſe* and *Learned*, of a *peaceful Conſcience*, of a Soul *enlightned* (like *Moſes*'s face) by a daily converſe with God, of *Meditations* grown ſprightly and chearful through a cloſer acquaintance with Heaven, and the Conſcience of no guilt but what we have wept and prayed againſt: they bereave us, laſtly, of the ſatisfaction of a fixt and ſteady *Choice*, of an aſſured and confident *Mind*, of obſequious and governable *Tempers*, of an even and orderly *Life*, and of the joys of glorious *Hopes* and a growing *Aſſurance*.

6. And yet after all, if we ſtate the caſe between the *Good* and *Bad*, as to point of worldly Pleaſure (according to the natural iſſue or conſequence of

things from their cauſes) thoſe poſſeſs *more* and *truer* pleaſures than theſe; for whilſt the Good only *approve*, and the Bad *dote*, the Good *uſe* and the Bad *abuſe* the World; the Good are *prudent* in their choice, and *conſtant* and *orderly* in their deportment; the Bad are *blind* and raſh in the former, and *light* and *diſorderly* in the latter; it muſt needs follow, that the Good are the *Maſters* of their Pleaſures, the Bad the *Slaves*; that the Good meet with what they expect, becauſe they have true notions of the World and things of it; but the Bad are defeated in their hopes, becauſe they ſwell and enlarge their deſires beyond all poſſibility of receiving ſatisfaction from an empty Creature; that the ſtate of the Good is as well ſecured and ſettled as the nature of things below would admit; but that of the Wicked is confuſed and uncertain.

What a ſilly thing now is impiety, and how wiſe and well contriv'd a thing is Religion! what can we deſire more of God; if he give us a pleaſant Fortune, he preſcribes us Rules, how to enjoy it prudently; if he involve us in a croſs one,

one, he ſupplies us pleaſures and comforts, to ſweeten it and ſupport us.

The Prayer.

O *Almighty God, and the kind and gracious Father of Mankind, I deſire to adore and bleſs thee, that thou haſt dealt thus by the poor Sons of Men; that thou haſt ſecured our happineſs by the Revelation of glorious Truths, by the encouragement of precious Promiſes, and by the ſanction of wiſe Laws: Grant moſt gracious God, that I may be daily converſant in the moſt glorious Goſpel to this end, that the pleaſures of the World and the Fleſh may not enſnare and entangle me; but that I may be enabled through thy Word and Spirit, to live above the corruptions of Luſt; to poſſeſs my veſſel in purity and honour, and to enjoy thy bleſſings moderately and thankfully, that I may at laſt be received into an Eternity of Reſt, and Peace, and Joy, through Jeſus Chriſt my Lord.*

CHAP. II.

Of Pain Conſidered as a temptation to ſin. Firſt of imaginary, ſecondly of real evils.

BY Pain, I mean every thing which is troubleſome: All troubles may be reduc'd under two Heads, *Imaginary*, and *Real* ones; by *Real*, I mean ſuch as do actually injure the mind or bodies of men; by *Imaginary*, I mean ſuch as could have no influence at all upon Men, but through the aſſiſtance of prejudice or fancy. I'll begin with the latter; and in ſpeaking to both, I muſt premiſe this, that I will not bring home every Argument by a cloſe Application (for then this very Head would ſwell into a vaſt proportion) but content my ſelf with proving, that there is no pain which can be a juſt warrant for ſin, becauſe the Goſpel hath provided ſuch Remedies as may render it ſupportable, and ſuch Rewards as may countervail all our ſufferings: *There is no Temptation which befalls us, but what is common*

mon to men, and God *is faithful, and will not ſuffer us to be tempted above what we are able,* i. e. (*above* the ſtrength he allows us) *but will with the temptation, make a way to eſcape, that we may be able to bear it.*

1. Of Imaginary evils. There are many things which are not really harſh and unſufferable in themſelves, but they become ſuch, becauſe it is the cuſtom of the World to think them ſo: For example, a *ſhallow Fortune* (but ſufficient for the neceſſary comforts of life) an *inglorious ſolitude*, or privacy, the *Opinions* of others concerning us; theſe things have no real Influence, either upon mind or body; they cannot make the Soul leſs *rational*, nor the Body leſs *healthy*; a Man may be happy here, and go to Heaven afterwards without much fame or wealth. *Imaginary Evils conſidered.*

That all the miſery that is deriv'd from theſe things, depends upon Opinion is plain, becauſe ſome have made that Poverty, Retirement and Contempt their *choice*, which is ſuch a Bug-bear to others; and ſo the ſame thing, which is one's *affliction*, becomes

anothers *pleaſure:* So that it is plain, *fancy* gives us the wound, not the things themſelves; or elſe if miſery were an inſeparable Companion to the things themſelves, it were impoſſible that Content ſhould ever ſojourn in Cells or Cottages, or ever be a ſtranger to Wealth and Honour. Of this ſort of troubles are all thoſe other paſſions which are enkindled in us by the impreſſions of things from without; for even *Beauty, Grandeur, Gaity, &c.* though in their own nature innocent things, are ſharpen'd and arm'd by our fancies with trouble and danger to our repoſe ——

Now though it be true, that as the cold or heat of Climates are things innocent enough to bodies inur'd to them, and yet are fatal to others; ſo here, though all temptations of the World are in themſelves harmleſs things, yet tis plain, that upon Beings ſo diſpos'd and temper'd as *ours* are, they make dangerous impreſſions: Therefore in the Goſpel of Chriſt, the remedies preſcribed by him, do all tend to the removal of theſe ill diſpoſitions, and

and the reforming our falſe Opinions, and the ſuppreſſing our inclinations: As,

1. Our firſt care muſt be to frame *our Opinions* of things by the Rule of *Faith*, and to root out all falſe Notions of things; to this end the holy Goſpel doth every where inſinuate the *emptineſs*, the *tranſitorineſs*, the *uncertainty* of all things here below; the *Excellency* of Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, and the little tendency which the things of the World have to promote it: And laſtly, the *Weight* and *Eternity* of happineſs in another World; all which contribute to our happineſs, as they arm us againſt the impreſſions of outward objects, by poſſeſſing us with a *contempt* of them, and with deſires far greater and nobler, and contradictory to thoſe other. *The Cure of ordinary Evils.*

2. The Goſpel of Chriſt enjoyns us to ſhun and fly temptations all that we can; we are to block up all the Avenues by which the World may make its approaches, the luſtful muſt not gaze upon Beauty, nor the ambitious on greatneſs; and becauſe ſin uſually gains

by

by Parley, we are carefully to ſhun the leaſt appearance of evil,—— not to entertain thoughts which either revive the Idæa's of paſt pleaſure, or tend to form in us the Fancy and Deſire of new.

3. We are to labour earneſtly to mortifie all the luſts of the Body by Faſting, and Watching, and Prayer, and a conſtant Temperance, encourag'd to it by the example of our Lord, and a whole Cloud of Witneſſes gone to Heaven before us, and the promiſe of reward annex'd to the careful performance of, and unwearied perſeverance in theſe duties. And,

4. The aſſiſtance of the mighty Spirit of God, and a certain Victory is promiſed to him who thus contends; and unleſs men will willingly deprive themſelves of ſuch an Auxiliary by not contending, or not begging him of Chriſt, or grieving him, it is not to be doubted but we ſhall obtain him, and together with him ſufficient ſtrength, and glory, honour, and immortality, will be the end of our warfare.

Theſe are the means, theſe are the Motives, this is the aſſiſtance which our bleſſed

bleſſed Jeſus hath preſcrib'd and offer'd us, by which we may be enabled to live above thoſe miſeries which they are intangled in who obey not his Goſpel, and defeat thoſe Airy Apparitions which would fright us into ſin.

Therefore in whatever condition I am, I will ſtill ask, What would my bleſſed Saviour have done, or ſaid, or thought in this caſe? What opinion of, or value for this or that thing, or condition, hath God? and I ſhall find, that no condition can make me truly miſerable, but that wherein I cannot *love God*, I cannot *pray*, or cannot do *good*: For if I can, I am both great and happy. *If a man love me*, Joh. 14. 23. *my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* Happy abode! What can my Soul deſire more; I cannot think my ſelf *mean*, who am his *Favorite*, nor can I be *poor*, who poſſeſs that God whoſe preſence makes up Heaven! My God, How happy ſhould I be, could I be content to make thee alone my Portion; but becauſe I cannot be content to be *poor* and *contemptible*, becauſe I ſeek my comforts from without,

out, becauſe I am not at leiſure to entertain thee only, therefore thou doſt not dwell ſo raviſhingly with me.

But I will ſeek thee more diligently hereafter; vain world adieu, I have Nobler hopes than thou canſt feed, and I ſhall have comforts thou canſt not rob me of! How can I be miſerable, if I be filled with joy and peace through believing? or if I abound with hope through the power of the Holy Ghoſt? I can think of that ſhine of Glory with which I ſhall be once inveſted, and then ſuffer theſe Rags with patience, till my Nuptials come, and my new Suits be made; I can love this contempt and poverty, becauſe it ſhall make my Crown more weighty, and my being more glorious.

What is it, O my Soul, for which I complain? What is it that I have loſt; Eſtate, Reputation? It is affirmed by the Spirit of God concerning all ſenſual pleaſures in general, That *they war againſt the Soul*, 1 Pet. 2. 11. in particular concerning wealth, *How hardly ſhall a rich man enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, Mat. 19. 23. concerning vain-glory, *and how can they believe who receive the praiſe*

Praiſe of Men? Am I then ſo much troubled becauſe my difficulties in the way to Heaven are diminiſhed, my Chains grown lighter, and mine Enemies fewer; becauſe my ties to, or dependency on the World are few, and conſequently my diſtractions in, and diverſions from holy duties, are the fewer? I have no fears, no cares, no contrivances, no jealouſies, becauſe I have no concern in it. How near Heaven am I grown, who am thus remov'd from Earth? And being in this condition, I am not expos'd to the changes of the World, I have nothing wherein ill fortune can attack or wound me. This ſtate is not ſo contemptible, which is thus full of peace, wherein I may poſſeſs my ſelf, and need not ſpend the greater portions of my life in things which *fame* or *greatneſs* requires of me, not *inclination* or *choice*.

The Prayer.

LOrd teach me to form my Opinions according to the light of thy Goſpel; to guard my Soul againſt all the impreſſions of the World, and Fleſh; to mortifie the

the inbred inclination of my Body to Luſt, and to fix my mind ſo upon the things that are not ſeen, that when-ever vain fears aſſault me from without, they may find the Houſe guarded by the ſtrongeſt Man. Amen, Amen.

SECT. II.

Of real Evils, whereof ſome are unavoidable, others only incident to this life, and though common to moſt, yet not neceſſary to all.

Of Evils Neceſſary and Unavoidable.

THere are ſome evils ſo natural and conſtant Appendages to this ſtate of Mortality and Imperfection, that unleſs men can ceaſe to think them Evils, they cannot be happy. For example, a Friend dies, or proves falſe, and ſuch like; or I am to die my ſelf, *i. e.* things happen in their natural courſe, and as I ought to expect them.—— I may as well quarrel with God, that he did not create me an Angel, and that my firſt Station was not in the Courts of Heaven, as complain of this. Now though it be true, that an Evil is not the leſs an Evil becauſe it is

augura-

ncurable, or *unavoidable*, or *univerſal*, yet I muſt from hence inferr that the wiſe Man ought to be better provided and confirm'd againſt ſuch, and that he gains no ſmall ſtep towards happineſs, who can diveſt theſe Evils of their affrighting ſhapes, which the Man ſhall in a great meaſure do, who ſhall expect nothing more in this ſtate than what is proper to it; and then can no more be aggriev'd at Death, Chance, Folly, *&c.* than at the imperfection of our intellectual capacities, the meanneſs of our natural inclinations, and the frailties of our bodies, for thoſe other are the effects of theſe, and yet no Man thinks himſelf miſerable, becauſe he doth not underſtand as much as God does; becauſe, being fleſh and bloud, he doth not will as nobly as Angels; And why ſhould he think it amiſs or hard, that being mortal, any thing ſhould die, or being imprudent or paſſionate, any thing ſhould act ſo?

It is highly reaſonable, that he who Created us out of nothing, ſhould Create us as he pleaſed; for he who was not bound to do any thing, cannot be blam'd for doing ſo much.——

But Chriſtianity reſts not here, it provides a Remedy for all theſe Evils.

eir Cure. 1. By the diſcovery of the Souls Immortality, of the Bodies Ruſurrection, and of Glorious rewards which ſhall Crown thoſe who ſuffer contentedly and patiently.

2. By the diſcovery of Objects fitted for the affections of an immortal Soul, noble and great enough to fill the biggeſt capacities, and moſt enlarg'd deſires; ſuch are God aud Jeſus Chriſt, and the glories of another life, which are unalterable and unchangeable; ſo that the happineſs and pleaſure of a Chriſtian Soul depends not upon theſe uncertain things below, but upon thoſe things which are above.

3. Since theſe misfortunes are ſuch as are unavoidable in this life, they can be no temptation to ſin, becauſe we cannot avoid them by ſinning; and they who endeavour todrown their ſenſe of worldly afflictions, by an indulgence in any ſins, do worſe than thoſe who kill themſelves to get rid of ſome uneaſie paſſion; the very Remedy is the worſt of miſchiefs.

But

But to proceed, as to pains which are common to, though not unavoidable in this life, I cannot chuſe but ſee there are a ſort of Men who ſuffer *bravely*; and yet I muſt confeſs they *ſuffer*, and tho they are patient, ceaſe not to be miſerable; theſe are the only things which I could ever think ſo unhappy as to deſerve my pity; and yet it will not be reaſonable to ſin for the avoiding ſuch ſufferings as theſe; for though Religion cannot remove all ſence of pain, and paſſion, (for then this World would be a Heaven; and the Scripture is plain, that no affliction for the preſent is joyous; and if they were not Fiery Trials, they would be no temptatations,) yet it ſupplies all the eaſe and comfort which ſuch a ſtate is capable of, and ſuch as is enough to make it ſupportable: Therefore I firſt premiſe theſe two Propoſitions.

Of Evils common, though not unavoidable.

1. That no Temptation befalls us but what is common to Men: That a whole Cloud of Witneſſes is gone before us in the ſevereſt and bloudieſt paths; and therefore that there is no ſtate which is not ſupportable by Divine Aſſiſtance,

and may not be paſs'd through without ſuch an ill demeanour as may forfeit our everlaſting happineſs.

2. That there is no condition ſo miſerable, but it is capable of ſome mixture of comforts; let us for an Example, in matter of fact, regard the Apoſtle of our Lord, 2 Cor. 6. *In affliction, in neceſſities, in diſtreſſes, in ſtripes, in impriſonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, faſtings*, and yet the Cloud had a bright as well as dark ſide; for, *v.* 10. *Though dying, yet behold we live, though chaſten'd, yet not kill'd, though ſorrowful, yet alway rejoycing, tho having nothing, yet poſſeſſing all things.*

Now it matters not, I confeſs, as to entire happineſs, whether Scale, of ſorrow or comfort, outweighs, becauſe to entire happineſs it is requir'd, that both parts of us, as well Body as Soul, enjoy good; yet it will become a wiſe Man to get as much eaſe as he can, and when the Sun is ſet, not to deſpiſe a Candle: — And this proves thus much, that no man can be neceſſitated to ſin, ſince a man can triumph o'er ſuch afflictions as theſe.

Having

Having premiſed thus much, I go on to conſider, that all Real Evils attack the *Mind*, or the *Body*; for what aſſaults only Reputation, or Eſtate, or other Poſſeſſions, I reckon amongſt *Imaginary Evils*; and indeed they are none at all, unleſs they make their paſſage thorough theſe to the Mind or Body.—As to the Body, I know not how to preſcribe to it; What are Arguments to the Stone, or Rhetorick to the Gout? but herein,

Of Bodily Pains how to be ſupported.

1. Either the Pain is moderate, or exquiſite; if moderate, it is ſupportable; if exquiſite, it cannot be laſting: we are ſomewhat beholden to the frailty and weakneſs of our Nature, for this in a great degree prevents our unhappineſs, a ſmall pain cannot make us miſerable, and a great one will not let us continue ſo, for it cruſhes it ſelf as well as us, by its own weight, and our Nature dies and droops under the pain which it cannot ſuffer; though for my part, I muſt confeſs, were it not for Chriſtianity, it would be but a poor comfort to me, that my pain is great enough to butcher me, and make an

end of me in a moment, that thoſe miſeries which diſpers'd and ſtragling I could tolerably well encounter, having combin'd and united all their forces, overthrow me in a moment; for men do not uſually think themſelves happy, becauſe they do not meet with miſeries which are too big for, and therefore not incident to their Nature; but miſerable, if they meet with all the utmoſt they are capable of bearing; yet through the aſſiſtance of Chriſtianity, this conſideration becomes matter of much comfort, for by the Revelation of Life and Immortality, the ſtate of pain, by being momentany, is as much deverſified to us and thoſe who knew no other life, as the Red Sea to *Iſrael* and *Egypt*, when the one only paſs'd through it, and the other periſh'd in it; and it is a mighty Obligation to perſevere in Holineſs, maugre all the oppoſition of pain and trouble, becauſe this pain is not worthy to be *compar'd* with the glory which ſhall be *revealed*.

2. If the affliction be too big for our ſtrengths, we are reaſonably to expect ſupernatural recruits; for ſince nothing befalls

befalls the good but by Divine Permiſſion, and in order to their good, I cannot ſee why, if God will have our lives a Martyrdom, we may not reaſonably expect the aſſiſtance he allowed the Primitive Martyrs; for without it we cannot ſuffer as we ought to do, and conſequently it cannot tend to our good.

3. I am to enquire, what the Soul can contribute towards making our bodily pain more eaſie, and our burthen more light; That it can do ſomewhat, is evident from examples of fact, as was ſhew'd in the ſecond Premiſe. I'll take notice farther only of two ſorts of men as a proof of this truth (though I might urge a hundred examples of the Power of the Mind, in ſuſtaining the Pains of the Body) the ambitious and the covetous men, which daily impoſe upon themſelves cruelties which would make up a very formidable burthen, if laid on by Providence. —— A vain Man for an empty name ſtarves in a Camp, lies on the ground till his poor limbs grow ſtiff and clayie, as the Earth their Bed; and after all charges thro

ſmoak and bloud to meet his death, or comes off trailing a ſhatter'd Limb about the Field, and is content with praiſe, for the loſs of a Leg or Arm. The covetous man lives upon Eggs or Roots, cloaths himſelf with Sackcloath almoſt, deſpiſes Fame and Honour, Friendſhip and Pleaſure too, and all this that he may die rich; and if neither of theſe think themſelves miſerable, I do not know why any other ſhould? Such is the ſtrength of Whimſie, or of Paſſion. Why Faith and Reaſon cannot do as much, I cannot ſee, becauſe Reaſon is ſtronger than Whimſie, and Faith calls in the aids of Imagination and Paſſion to boot.—Let it be granted then, that the mind can aſſiſt us ſomewhat in our ſufferings; and then let us inquire what Chriſtianity preſcribes as Remedies againſt *Pain*, to enable us to conquer it.

1. It diſcovers to us the true end of all afflictions, God's glory, and our happineſs, for aſſuring us that all things are govern'd by a wiſe, powerful and gracious God, who doth not afflict the Children of men out of any peeviſh humour, it muſt needs follow, that his chaſtiſements

ments muſt be deſign'd to excellent ends and purpoſes; that all ſhall work together for the beſt to them who love God; And why ſhould we not ſubmit willingly to the Conducts of a *Wiſe* God? Or why ſhould not we ſuffer that condition contentedly, which promotes moſt our *own happineſs*? Why ſhould we be diſſatisfied with a more boiſterous wind, which drives us more ſpeedily into our Port? If his glory be the main end, and that be as much or more promoted by our *patience* in adverſity, as thankfulneſs in proſperity, and our own Sanctification no leſs advanc'd, is it not juſt matter of comfort rather than repining?

2. It promiſes a weight of infinite glory which theſe light afflictions work for us; ſo that that condition cannot be miſerable which is full of the moſt glorious hopes, and thoſe too at a little diſtance, for this life is but a moment.

3. It calls us to the juſt conſideration of our own Merits, and having diſplaid a Scheme of our own ſins, it afterwards aſſures us, that we are puniſhed here, that we may not be condemn'd hereafter; Both which conſiderations beget in us

Humility and Love, and both render all ſufferings eaſie; for as Pride makes every little diſgrace intolerable, and magnifies every affront, ſo Humility changes the face of the whole, and repreſents the ſtate, as very anſwerable to our merits, very reaſonable and juſt.

4. It propoſes us the examples of God's deareſt Children, and of the holy *Jeſus* himſelf, and invites us to weigh their ſhame and glory, their ſorrows and their Crowns together; to conſider their patience, and the love of God, and ſo to ſtrive earneſtly, beholding their end.

5. It aſſures us of ſtrength in proportion to our neceſſities, that God who looks on and ſees the Combat, will ſupply us with force anſwerable to the danger; and then what matter how violent our afflictions are?

The ſum of all is, Afflictions are intolerable, becauſe we our ſelves ſharpen their ſtings, and warm their poiſon; becauſe we neglect or ſlight our own ſtrengths, we do not reaſon, believe and pray: I ſhall thankfully bleſs God for my afflictions, if all the while I ſuffer I am

am waſhing off a ſin, and labouring for a Crown, and untwiſting my ſelf from he World, and dreſſing my Soul for Heaven; I will thank God, that he hath caſt me into a condition void of thoſe ſnares which ſoften and ſenſualize the mind; to become ſenſual is a worſe fate, than to be ſcorn'd, or poor, for that is a change of our very humanity, and draws after it the contempt of Heaven; this is a change only of outward circumſtances, and is fear'd only by the Vain and Gay, and ſcorn'd by fools; for to be *truly humble*, is to be *truly honourable*, and to *ſuffer Chriſtianity*, is the infallible Character of a *great mind*. Lord, I know that I am here but a Stranger and a Pilgrim, and I will not propoſe to my ſelf Reſt and Luſcious Pleaſures, I am now in a ſtate of Warfare, and I expect not my eaſe, and a Kingdom, till I have vanquiſhed: I am the Servant of the Holy Jeſus, and I will take up my Croſs and follow him; and if he calls me to walk upon the Waters, I cannot believe that he will let me periſh.

I have in this diſcourſe of Pleaſure and Pain had an eye to two things, not only

only to ſhew, that there can be no reaſonable ground for a Temptation to Sin in either, but alſo do demonſtrate the Excellency of the Chriſtian Principles, by ſhewing how they ſerve to all the ends and neceſſities of this mortal life, to regulate our Pleaſures, and alleviate our Pains; for elſe it had been enough for me to have ſaid, that there is no reaſon to quit an *Eternity* of pleaſure for a *moment's*; and that no pain can be equal to that of Hell; and therefore, that no man can be ſeduced from his Duty by either Pleaſure or Pain, if he do really believe the Goſpel.

f troubles of ind.

The Evils which diſquiet the *Minds* of men (as far as concerns this Head of Pain) may be reduced to two.

1. Doubting or uncertainty, when we have no ſure knowledge of matters of the greateſt moment.

2. Amazement and fear proceeding from guilt, and the apprehenſion of future vengeance.

oubting concerning Points portant, now moved by the ſpel.

The firſt of theſe is now ſufficiently removed by the Goſpel of Chriſt, which hath bronght Life and Immortality to Light, and diſcovered all thoſe glorious and

and important Truths which relate to our Eternal Welfare, and our belief is herein founded upon Divine Revelation, for God bore Witneſs to the Authors of this Goſpel by Miracles, and by his holy ſpirit, by the Reſurrection of Chriſt from the Dead, *&c.* and ſuch is the purity and excellency of this holy Doctrine, that no man who believes a God, can chuſe but ſee that an obedience to ſuch holy Precepts muſt be acceptable to him.

Deſpair removed.

The ſecond proceeds from the Conſcience of our ſins, and a dread of the Divine Nature, either of which, if they drive man into deſpair, muſt neceſſarily plunge him into profaneneſs and immorality, or into melancholy and madneſs. The Goſpel hath remov'd both theſe Evils.

1. By the glad tidings of Reconciliation through the Bloud of Chriſt, whom he hath ſet forth to be a Propitiation for the ſins of all who will believe and repent, to deliver them who through fear of Death were all their life time ſubject to bondage, *Heb.* 2. 15.

2. By

2. By a clear Revelation of the goodneſs and mercifulneſs of the Divine Nature, which courts our return, beſeeches us to be reconcil'd to him, and waits for an opportunity to ſhew Mercy: Whence the Goſpel Characters of him now, are that of a *Father*, the *God of Hope*, the *God of Comfort* and *Conſolation*, and *Mercies*, and *Love*; ſo that the minds of Chriſtians are filled with joy and peace in believing, and abound in Hope thro the power of the Holy Ghoſt. From all which it follows, that no man can have any temptation to ſin, from any rational ſuggeſtions, from any rational fears or doubts; for this diſcovery of the Divine Nature, and this Death of Chriſt, invites men to Holineſs, by the Obligations of Divine Love, and their own intereſt: But of this I have treated before.

The Prayer.

O *Thou God of Hope, of Love and Mercy! thou art become exceeding gracious to thy people, thou haſt turn'd away our Captivity and refreſh'd us by an Eternal Redemption; though this World be*

be a Wilderneſs compar'd with the other, yet thou here feedeſt us with Manna; *thoſe bright Truths, and that glorious Aſſiſtance which are able to ſcatter all the melancholy Clouds of Afflictions and Sorrow which gather upon the face of this preſent Life: Lord, grant that I may make this uſe of them, to raiſe my ſelf above the weakneſs and paſſions of this preſent life, that the trial of my Faith may be to praiſe and glory, and to my everlaſting felicity in the day of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Amen, Amen, *bleſſed Jeſus.*

CHAP. III.

Of Temptations not reducible to pain and pleaſure. Infidelity. Late repentance. The littleneſs of a ſin; with remedies of each. The Concluſion of this part made up of ſeveral directions fit to fortifie the mind againſt all ſort of Temptations in General.

THough theſe (*Pain* and *Pleaſure*) are the great Magazines from whence the Devil brings forth all his Arms

Arms and Temptations, yet there are ſome peculiar ways whereby he doth inſnare and intangle us, for he doth not aſſault us openly, unleſs he hath before corrupted the Guards: he deals with us as with *Eve*, *Ye ſhall not ſurely die*; for if he had told her plainly, The fruit is fair and pleaſant, 'tis worth your while to die for it, certainly ſhe would have bid open defiance to him, and ſcorn'd the temptation. Thus he deals with us, he cheats and deludes us into vain hopes, and falſe preſumptions; we wound our ſelves to death, and yet flatter our ſelves with life; we forfeit our Innocence, and yet imprudently promiſe our ſelves a Heaven.

I will therefore conclude this Part with a particular Chapter concerning Temptations,—which are moſtly

Infidelity. 1. *Infidelity.* This is the general way the Devil takes to deſtroy the Souls of men, and ſeduce them from their Duty; for it will neceſſarily follow, that it is the moſt notorious folly imaginable to oppoſe our inclinations, or to deny our ſelves any thing, if there be no reward for holy Souls; and therefore againſt this,

this, we are exhorted to take up the Shield of Faith, *Eph.* 6. 16. to poſſeſs our hearts with a firm belief of the truth of the Goſpel of Chriſt. For this Reaſon the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles are ſo full and frequent in the proof of the Fundamentals of Chriſtianity, as the Reſurrection, *&c.* and of this one Propoſition; That Jeſus is the Son of God; proving it from his Power and Holineſs, and Wiſdom, and his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion into Heaven, and from the deſcent of his Spirit upon his followers in ſuch a publick manner; and I heartily wiſh that all that profeſs the Name of Chriſt would.

1. Lay ſeriouſly to heart the clearneſs and evidence of theſe proofs, and not perfunctorily paſs over all the paſſages of the Goſpel, which are written on purpoſe that we may believe, without weighing them. *In Cure.*

2. That they would examine themſelves what are the firſt Motives which prompt them to *Infidelity*; *Do they not love darkneſs, becauſe their deeds are evil?* And do they not rather wiſh the Goſpel falſe, than believe it ſo?

5. That

3. That they would not ſtifle their Reaſon, and refuſe Audience to thoſe Pleas the Goſpel offers in its own defence, when they cannot anſwer them; do not think it is enough to divert your Conſcience a while from its clamours and importunity, but ſatisfie it, and do not reſt till you bring ſtronger proofs againſt the truth of the Goſpel than thoſe are which Patronize it; for he that will eject a received truth out of its poſſeſſion, muſt do it by a greater force and clearneſs of Arguments, than thoſe are which eſtabliſh'd it; and being firmly perſwaded of this, that Jeſus is the Son of God, *&c.* it will be hard for any temptation to get much ground upon your minds; and therefore it were well and wiſely done, every morning to repeat our Creed ſoberly, mindfully, and thoughtfully, and confirm our ſelves in the belief of it.

Deferring Repentance.

Sect. 2. *Late Repentance.* But why ſhould I reſolve to amend after this ſin, rather than before it? Are my Accounts too little, that I would add this to the Score before I ſtate them? Or hath my God and Saviour deſerved ſo little of me,

me, that I think a ſhort life too much to be ſpent in his Service, though he ſhould give me a Heaven? Or am I ſure that I ſhall have a keener appetite to Holineſs after I have taſted the luſciouſneſs of ſin? Or will ſin be the more eaſily put off, the more habitual it is grown? Or do I hope to find God the more merciful, the more I provoke him? Or if the ſin be now too ſweet, too taking to be rejected (which is in truth the reaſon) how do I know it will not be ſo always? Or if my body decay, how ſhall I know when it is weakneſs or repentance, whether a change in my temper or my mind? Or how do I know that ſome other ſin will not grow up in its ſtead? not only Youth, but every quarter of our life hath ſome baits or other ripe, and in ſeaſon; And how know I what limits the Almighty hath prefixt to his patience? he cuts off ſome ſooner than ſome, and the meaſure of one man's Iniquities is finiſh'd before another's? Or how know I that God will allow me more ſtrength, who make ſo ill an uſe of this? O let us remember our ſelves, and ſin no more, we are blind, and do not ſee our danger;

ger; the hazard we run of *hardning* our hearts and *forfeiting* God's Grace, and provoking his wrath, and *being cut off* in a moment, when we think not of it.

This Section is to be underſtood of deliberate Sin, not of unavoidable frailties.

Sect. 3. *It is a little ſin*; he is a very ill Caſuiſt, who deliberating upon a Temptation, forms that fooliſh diſtinction of Mortal and Venial ſins, for he proceeds upon a ſuppoſition which is wholly falſe; *i. e.* That there are ſome ſins which do not interrupt the Love of God; God cannot approve of Sin in the leaſt degree however: But if, as ſome think, this Veniality or pardonableneſs is not founded in the nature of the Sins themſelves, but in the good Will and Kindneſs of God; it will behove him, who will act ſecurely, to prove, that God hath any where declar'd, that he will not be diſpleaſed with him for thoſe ſins which he hath nevertheleſs forbidden upon pain of eternal wrath; or if this be Nonſenſe, let him prove that God will not be angry with him for that very ſin he is about to commit. In few words, the true uſe of diſtinguiſhing ſins by their ſeveral degrees

grees of mortality or pardonableneſs, is not to direct men how to ſin ſafely, or how to chuſe what ſins they may commit, but to direct the man who hath committed them, concerning the nature and degrees of his repentance; for in plain terms, no ſin can be juſtly call'd little, which we deliberate and conſult about, ſin receiving its aggravation not ſo much from the matter of the ſin it ſelf, as from the *ſtrength* of our *paſſion*, and the *Excellency* of that God whoſe Law it is a Violation of; for tho the inſtance of the ſin may be a little one, yet if we ſin as far as we think we ſafely may, it is a foul argument of the *baſeneſs* of our temper, and the *imperfection* of our love; like *Judas*, we betray our Saviour for a contemptible Piece; a Smile, a Word, prevails more than the love and bounty of my Creator; And do we not then deſerve to periſh? If we will be ſo fooliſh to chuſe thus, why may not God be ſo juſt as to puniſh us?

2. That ſin is generally moſt *Fatal*, which looks moſt *Innocent*; for the Devil is never more apt to inſinuate himſelf

ſelf, than when transformed, he appears in a ſhape of *Innocence*: Let but a man allow himſelf the utmoſt liberty he thinks *lawful*, and he ſhall be ſoon betray'd into what's unlawful; and he that ſhall indulge himſelf in any little vanity, ſhall be ſhrewdly tempted into greater, beſides the ſtrange danger of growing ſenſual, and undiſcerning; and beſides that, the leaſt ſin, even in the ſenſe of thoſe who moſt favour the diſtinction, grows mortal by frequent Commiſſion—— Therefore in oppoſition to this temptation, we are taught

Cure. 1. To grow in Grace, and to go on to perfection, as being a ſtate of the greateſt ſecurity; and this requires the moſt careful and circumſpect walking, the moſt entire denial of our own wills and affections; all which is inconſiſtent with the admiſſion of the moſt Venial ſin; For how can it conſiſt with an ardent love of God to chuſe to diſpleaſe him a little? Whatever a little trifling injury may ſeem to an unconcerned Spectator, yet if it paſs between two who mutually love, it will ſeem great to both.

2. We

2. We are exhorted to ſhun, not only every ſin, but every appearance of it; not to dwell within the Confines or Suburbs of Temptations; not to act the leaſt thing which we but doubt may be unlawful, and therefore ſurely nothing that we know is ſo; not to diſpute nicely what we may without danger do, but to do all that is Noble and Praiſeworthy.

3. When we have done all, we are but unprofitable ſervants, and therefore let us, who I am confident ſhall never do all we ought, endeavour to do all we can; when we have watch'd and when we have pray'd, when we have contended, and when we have fought, when we have done all we can, there will be ſtill ſins enough to exerciſe the mercy and goodneſs of God; ſins ſecret which we know not of, ſins of ſudden ſurreptions, imperfections mixt with our holy duties, and innumerable evil motions, which, unleſs the Bloud of Jeſus, our own Repentance, and the mercies of God intervene, would unavoidably damn us.

Tmpta- of Frind- and Soci-

Sect. 4. When theſe ways fail, he ſets upon us by others Engines; by our Friends; by ſome or other who have an Aſcendant over us; and it is not ſeldom ſeen, that the *Friends* of our Boſoms are the greateſt *Enemies* of our Souls: For the truth is, Friendſhip is the deareſt and moſt pleaſant thing in the World; whence it often happens, that men of the moſt excellent tempers, and the moſt generous Principles, have been often induc'd by Friendſhip to do or ſuffer, what neither their proper pleaſure nor pain could ever have ingaged them to; and in all honeſt and allowable inſtances, to preferr a Friend before our ſelves, is, if not a Duty, yet certainly an Heroick and commendable action. But here, as to our purpoſe in hand, the Caſe is thus to be ſtated, Whether I am to obey God or my Friend; whether I am to ſerve the intereſt of my own Soul, or comply with a Friend's peccant humour, to the *manifeſt hazard* of my *own Soul*, and *his*. The caſe thus ſtated, is, I think, too plain to contain in it any doubt or Controverſie at all; for our Obligati-

e Remedy.

on

on to God, who hath more powerfully indear'd himſelf to us, ſuperſedes all Obligations in this caſe, to our Friend; nay, Friendſhip it ſelf obliges us rather to *advice* and *reproof*, than compliance; it being the true duty of affection to do not what is moſt *pleaſant*, but moſt *uſeful* for our Friend: And I muſt ſay farther, that friendſhip is, or ought to be founded in Vertue; and therefore without the guilt of lightneſs, or inconſtancy, I may *lawfully* as far renounce my *Friend*, as he doth his *Innocence*; for he is become quite another thing, and hath nothing of that Charm and Grace which made me love him: In this caſe it is enough to anſwer as our Saviour did to the Devil, Thus and thus 'tis written; it is not lawful for me to do ſo, and therefore I will not, for Vertue needs no excuſe; if they can act a Crime without bluſhing, I ſee no reaſon why I ſhould be aſham'd to own a Vertue; and if they think it unreaſonable that we ſhould deny them the liberty of enjoying themſelves, I think it much more ſo, that they ſhould refuſe us the liberty of denying our

ſelves. —— And this way of plain dealing will be every way more uſeful to your ſelf and Brother, than diſguiſes and excuſes: For he that ſhifts off his friends opportunity to ſin, not by a flat *denial*, but a *pretence*, ſeems to confeſs that he denies compliance, not out of *Conſcience*, but convenience; and ſo expoſes himſef to a freſh aſſault, becauſe his Friend looks upon him as Conquerable, and only waits for an opportunity wherein he may attack him in better circumſtances, and a better temper: all which would be avoided by a plain and hearty refuſal. 2. This way, in common reaſon, muſt prove moſt uſeful to our Brother, for how do we know but the influence of our Friendſhip, by the aſſiſtance of God's Grace, may gain upon him, or open diſallowance may at laſt ſtartle him into a ſerious conſideration; which will be enough to defeat him of his Folly; and the example of our Vertue may encourage his imitation, by letting him ſee that Vertue is *eaſie* as well as *lovely* —— Againſt all devices of Satan and Temptations in general, I lay down

down theſe three or four Conſiderations.

1. That be the Excuſe or Impoſture as cunningly wove as it can, it matters not; be the excuſe what it will, I am to conſider this, that by hearkening to ſuch devices of Satan, that croud which now throngs Hell, deſcending into thoſe horrible Regions; never any man yet ſinn'd with a deſign or perſwaſion to be damn'd for it, but he contriv'd his excuſe as ſubtilly, and provided a reſerve as ſafe as poſſibly he could, and yet they miſcarried, God cut them off ſuddenly, or ſin grew too ſtrong, and they too weak. *General Conſiderations againſt all ſorts of Temptations.*

2. It is eaſier to conquer a Luſt, than to ſatisfie it; the Ambitious may grow *content* ſooner than *great*; the Covetous may ſooner *moderate* their deſires, than *ſatisfie* them; the unclean may more eaſily *gain a chaſte Spirit*, than *ſatisfie* the ravings of a wandring Luſt; for a man's Frame grows tractable and governable by wholſome Reaſonings and ſound Advice; Heavenly, By Prayers and Meditations: But if you liſten to a wanton ſuggeſtion, it will kindle into Luſt; and Luſt,

Luſt, if incouraged, will flame into a Paſſion; and our paſſions will grow ſavage and imperious, if fed and pamper'd, and then no greatneſs can glut Ambition, no enjoyments ſate a Luſt: And ſhall we chuſe a harder way which leads to an Eternal ruine, before an eaſie way which guides us to happineſs?

3. It ought heedfully to be conſider'd, that temptations do not gain upon any by ſtrength of Argument, but by importunity and prepoſſeſſion; no man that weighs the things temporal and eternal, can preferr in his judgment thoſe to theſe, but thoſe are ſeen, and theſe are not; thoſe are continually with us, and they carry their Arguments and Rhetorick in their looks, and every ſenſe of us is conſtantly beſet and applied? and ſo by inſenſible degrees they inſinuate, and then poſſeſs us, and captive us: The beſt way therefore to ſecure our ſelves, is either firſt to cut off all opportunities of being tempted, by retirement and retreat from the World; or ſecondly, to countermine the World by an equal diligence, making our Meditations and Prayers more frequent than our

our entertainments of ſenſe; that ſo the Soul may be called off from the things without, to meditate upon the things above; as often at leaſt as Gaity and Luxury invite it out.

4. As there are objects of vanity, ſo there are too in the world objects that adviſe and reprove us, ſuch as diſtreſs and ſickneſs; that raiſe our thoughts, ſuch as the works of God's hand, and all others are capable of a good Obſervation; as for example, what is an evident vanity, may be the matter of our pity, rather than love; Feaſts and Muſick may ſuggeſt the Almighty's goodneſs, and lead us to the conſideration of a better ſtate; and if we uſe this method, we ſhall reap a double benefit; firſt, we ſhall avoid the inſinuations to ſin viſible in outward objects; and ſecondly, we ſhall have our Souls ſtor'd with excellent thoughts.

5. Never ſlacken or abate thy diligence, though thou haſt arriv'd at a great degree of Piety, and haſt mortified the fleſh, and ſubdued the World, there is no ſecurity on this ſide Heaven; many good men fall, the beſt may; and

and *therefore let him that ſtands take heed leſt he fall*; for what will be the Iſſue, God only knows. *The Night is far ſpent, the Day is at hand*; and wilt thou let go the Victory, when thou haſt broke the main ſtrength of the Battel; Thou art almoſt above fears, and above ſtrugglings; thy life haſtens away, and thy task diminiſhes, and wilt thou ſhipwreck in the Port? Thou art juſt going into the Arms of thy Lord, and wilt thou now ſuffer thy Beauty to fade, and thy Glories to languiſh? The Bridegroom is juſt at the door, and wilt thou now ſuffer the Lamp to go out?

The Prayer.

ETernal God, *who ſeeſt that I walk upon Snares, and in the midſt of Enemies, give me the Spirit of Fear, Humility and Watchfulneſs, that I may walk circumſpectly, paſſing the time of my ſojurning here in fear; incompaſs me with the whole Armour of Faith, that I may be able to fight a good fight, to finiſh my courſe with joy, and to have confidence at the appearance of my Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Amen, Amen, *bleſſed God.*

Practical

Practical Chriſtianity.

PART IV.

Of three general inſtruments of Holineſs, or preſervatives againſt Sin; viz. Sacraments, Prayers and Faſtings.

CHAP. I.

Sacraments, Prayer and Faſting may be conſider'd in a threefold reſpect. 1. *As parts of Divine Worſhip, or of Holineſs in general.* 2. *As Inſtruments of advancing Holineſs.* 3. *As Remedies and Antidotes againſt Temptations. In each of which relations I will conſider each of them a little.*

I. *Of Baptiſm.*

COnſider'd in the firſt ſenſe of the three, it contains a *Solemn Profeſſion* of the Chriſtian Faith, and actual *Renunciation* of thoſe Enemies of Chriſtianity,

ſtianity, the *World*, the *Fleſh*, and the *Devil*, and a *liſting ones ſelf* into the ſervice and obedience of Chriſt.

And becauſe I cannot think that there is any eſſential part in the Syſtem of Chriſtianity merely *Ceremonial*, I cannot think, but that beſides the *Admiſſion* into the Church, which is the Body of Chriſt, and conſequently a *Title* to all the glorious privileges of its Members, both which we derive from Baptiſm; our bleſſed Saviour doth endow the Perſon Baptized with *power* from on high to perform all thoſe great engagements he takes upon him; as will appear to any one who ſhall conſider, 1. The *Nature* of Chriſtianity, which doth always annex a Grace to the external Mean, or Inſtrument; or,

2. The *great things* ſpoken of this Sacrament; or,

3. The *value* all underſtanding Chriſtians have had for it, or the effects which follow it, when practis'd in the Infancy of the Church; and I humbly conceive this to be the ſenſe of the Church of *England*, which ſuppoſes the things ſignified by the outward Ceremony

ny of Baptiſm, to be a *Death unto Sin, and a New Birth unto Righteouſneſs.*

But whatever become of this Notion, it is certain, that it is a ſtrange Obligation to a Holy Life, and a remedy againſt Sin, as being a moſt ſolemn ingagement of our ſelves to the obedience of Chriſt; from which we cannot ſtart back, without drawing upon our ſelves the guilt and puniſhment of Perjury, and forfeiting all thoſe advantages we partake of by it; and I wiſh all would lay this to heart, who plead the Obligations of *Civility* and *Friendſhip*, *Cuſtom* and *Faſhion*, in defence of their ſins, as if any trifling Ceremony were ſufficient to ſuperſede our Obligation to Chriſt, and acquit us of that guilt which the Breach of the moſt ſacred Covenant brings upon us.

The Prayer.

BLeſſed and holy Saviour, give me grace to remember my Baptiſmal Vow, to remember that I am a ſworn Enemy *to the* World, *the* Fleſh, *and the* Devil; *and inable me to fight the good fight*

fight of Faith under thy Banner the Croſs. Let me have no truce, entertain no friendſhip with thine and my Enemies: Let them flatter me, if they will, with ſmiles and promiſes, I am ſure they mean nothing to me but death and ruine. How ſhall any fantaſtick Obligations cancel my duty to thee, reſulting from ſo ſolemn a Covenant? In vain doth the World diſguiſe its temptations under the forms of Civility *and* Honour; *I know no* Civility *which can oblige me to* renounce *my* Vows, *no* Honour *that can excuſe my* Perjury; *in vain doth the World aſſault me by Greatneſs, and Wealth and Glory; theſe are the very things I reſolved againſt when I took up the Croſs of my Crucified Saviour in my Baptiſm: Grant, O bleſſed Lord, that I may have* mortified affections, *and a* Victorious Faith, *an* humble meek Spirit, *and* glorious Hopes, *that after this troubleſome life is ended, I may reſt with thee in Everlaſting Glory.* Amen, Amen.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Of the Lord's Supper.

THE Supper of our Lord may fall under the ſame forms of Conſideration which Baptiſm did; that is, it may be conſider'd,

1. As a part of Divine Worſhip.
2. As an Inſtrument of Holineſs.
3. As a Remedy againſt Temptation.

I will look upon it briefly under each of theſe Notions, and herein I will guide my ſelf by that incomparable Office of this Church, which hath admirably expreſs'd and reduc'd to a method the whole mind of the Goſpel relating to this matter; for which I have often bleſs'd God, whilſt I beheld and reverenc'd that Primitive plainneſs, and truly Chriſtian Spirit viſible in it.

Firſt then, our Lord's Supper conſider'd as an act, or part of Religious Worſhip or Holineſs, contains in it theſe four things.

1. An humble acknowledgment of our ſins.

2. A devout Profeſſion of our Faith in Chriſt, that we are the Diſciples of a crucified Saviour, and expect Salvation by no other way, than that Sacrifice of his Body and Bloud offer'd upon the Croſs.

3. A ſolemn Oblation of moſt humble and hearty thanks to God for this ineſtimable benefit, his beſtowing his Son upon us to die for us; and to our Maſter and only Saviour Chriſt, for his exceeding great love in dying for us.

4. A moſt ſolemn Oblation of our ſelves, Souls and Bodies, to be a holy, lively, and acceptable Sacrifice unto God: ſo that this Sacrament conſiſts of a whole Conſtellation of Graces, *Repentance*, *Faith*, *Hope*, *Charity*. It is a nearer approach into the preſence of God, and more ſolemn exerciſe of the Graces of the Goſpel; and this gives a very fair account of the reaſon of its frequent practice, for nothing can be

Secondly, A more effectual Inſtrument of Holineſs, upon theſe and the following accounts.

1. That

1. That the preparation neceſſary as a condition of our worthy Reception, doth awaken our Souls, and refreſh all our Graces, and mortifie all our ſenſual Luſts, and draws us nearer to Heaven; and the neceſſity of ſuch a preparation as the Church-office preſcribes, appears from hence, that Repentance, and Faith, and Charity, are abſolutely neceſſary to enable a man to exert thoſe acts (before-mention'd) which conſtitute this Sacrament, conſider'd as a part of Divine Worſhip; and therefore to approach that holy Table without a Soul ſo qualified, is to affront and mock the Majeſty of Heaven.

2. That the exerciſe of our Graces in receiving, doth increaſe and improve them; that Act of humble *Adoration* and profound *Proſtration* of our ſelves before God under a ſence of his Purity and Majeſty, and our ſinfulneſs and meanneſs; that lively Act of *Faith*, whereby the Soul doth profeſs its firm belief of, and dependence upon the Death and Paſſion of its dear Lord and Saviour for Salvation; that *love* whereby the Soul offers its praiſes, and its ſelf,

a Sacrifice to God, do leave ſuch lively and laſting impreſſions upon mens minds, as are not quickly nor eaſily effac'd; and the Soul, by the delight it finds in exerting theſe Graces, is inkindled with a deſire of repeating the ſame Acts.

3. That the Sacrament it ſelf hath a natural tendency to promote Holineſs: 1. By its ſenſible *Repreſentations* of a Crucified Saviour, the Symbols themſelves being fit to bring into our minds the Pain and Sufferings of our dear Lord and Maſter. 2. By that *inward Grace* (inſeparable from the worthy Reception of it) beſtow'd upon us to refreſh and ſtrengthen our Souls, to root and confirm our Faith, to inflame our Love and perfect our Hopes. 3. By being a *Pledge and Aſſurance* to us of the pardon of our ſins through the Bloud of Chriſt.

4. That it is a new and repeated Engagement of our ſelves to the ſervice of Chriſt, to an obedience to his Laws, and a Renunciation of thoſe Enemies of the Chriſtian, the *World*, the *Fleſh*, and the *Devil*. From all this it is eaſie to inferr, 3. That

3. That it is a ſtrong Fence and Antidote againſt Temptations; for theſe freſh impreſſions of our Saviours love, the new ſtrengths of Divine Grace, the vigour of a new and ſolemn Ingagement to Obedience, fill the Soul with a holy zeal againſt Sin, and with a glorious contempt of ſenſual pleaſures.

The Prayer.

AND now, O my God, what ſhould make me ſo prodigally venturous of my own ſafety, as to neglect the frequent uſe of this holy Sacrament! have I not need frequently to examine my ſelf? Are not thy Graces apt to wither and decay unleſs thus water'd and refreſh'd? Doth not my converſe with the World, and my communication with Fleſh and Blood, render it neceſſary for me to renew my reſolutions againſt them as often as I can? Or is there not a holy delight in the exerciſe of all this, that ſurpaſſes all the pleaſures of a ſenſual Life? and is it not a Sacrifice that my Lord and Saviour is highly pleas'd with? And is it not reaſonable that I ſhould oblige him,

who died for me, with this frequent acknowledgment of his infinite love evidenc'd in his Death? Pardon me, O my God, that I have been ſo ungrateful to thee, ſo ſenſeleſs of my own welfare and advantage! for the time to come, I will delight in this holy Communion, I will often offer up my ſelf a Sacrifice to thee, and profeſs my Faith in a Crucified Saviour; and there beg thy aſſiſtance and conduct through the difficult paths of this preſent life: And, O my God, accept thou of my addreſſes and praiſes, through thine infinite Mercies, and the Bloud of Chriſt. Amen.

CHAP. III.

Of Prayer.

PRayer may be conſider'd under thoſe three Heads I before mention'd: And,

1. *As a part of Holineſs.* It is an acknowledgment of God's being our God; a *confeſſion* of his Majeſty, and our meanneſs, being a ſolemn *Adoration*

tion and *Worſhip* of him; 'tis a Sacrifice of *praiſe* to him; 'tis an act of *Humiliation*, and of *Repentance*, and of *Faith*, and *Reliance* upon him: And from hence we may inferr, what preparation of the Soul is neceſſary to a right diſcharge of this Duty; that *ex tempore* Addreſſes are the moſt improper, and the moſt unwelcome to God; for theſe are at beſt but imagined to raiſe thoſe paſſions or diſpoſitions in the Soul, which ought to be preſuppos'd in it before-hand, to the rendring of our Prayers acceptable; for we draw near in Prayer to offer up a Sacrifice which we had prepared before: And we may Secondly, conclude, That whatever the *Gifts* of Prayer, be the *Spirit* of Prayer is that which doth diſpoſe and prepare the mind by ſuch qualities as are fit to exert the Acts I nam'd before; and I am apt to think, that a Soul which thus prepar'd, and fixing it ſelf in the immediate preſence of God, dwells with an inward Devotion in thoſe acts of Adoration and Praiſe, Humiliation and Faith, without expreſſing theſe actings of the mind in words (I ſpeak of pri-

vate prayer) doth, in St *Paul*'s ſenſe, *Rom.* 8. 26. pray by the Spirit; and conſequently, in Publick, thoſe Prayers are moſt ſpiritual, which ſhare moſt of this preparation.

2. *As an inſtrument of Holineſs:* it doth exerciſe all our graces, and refreſh and improve them by exerciſing; the breathings of the Divine Spirit (which is in an extraordinary manner aſſiſtant in this holy exerciſe) fill the minds of men with *Joy*, and *Peace*, and *Hope*, which confirms them in their Chriſtian Warfare, and makes them diſreliſh all the pleaſures of a ſinful life. Laſtly, Prayer hath extraordinary promiſes annext to it, of receiving whatſoever we ask with Faith, *Matt.* 7. 7. *Ask, and it ſhall be given to you.*

3. *It is an Antidote againſt Temptation*; for it poſſeſſes the Soul with an *Awe* of the Divine Majeſty, with a *ſenſe* of his unſpeakable *love*, and with a *horrour* againſt ſin, whilſt we ennumerate his benefits, and our ſins, with all their aggravating circumſtances: And certainly no man can be ſo ſenſleſs as to repeat thoſe ſins which he did juſt now

b emoan

bemoan and abhorr, renounce and reſolve againſt before God, nor will it be eaſie for him to fall, who comes forth forwarn'd and arm'd to encounter a Temptation. Laſtly, Prayer convinces a man of the lovelineſs and happineſs of a holy life, for he finds that his Peace and reliance grows up or decays together with his Vertue.

If I did Pray earneſtly and often, how *humble*, how *holy*, how *heavenly*, and *exalted* would my Soul be? With what glorious Notions of the Divine Majeſty, what dreadful apprehenſions of ſin, what an unquenchable thirſt of Holineſs, what fears and jealouſies of the World and Fleſh, would my Spirit be poſſeſs'd? And what a mighty influence would all this have upon my Converſation? How humbly, how warily, how fervently ſhould I walk?

But when I do not pray often? or with this care and preparation, How *lazy* and *careleſs* is my life? How *dim* and *imperfect* my conceptions? How *flat* and *taſteleſs* my reliſh of Spiritual things? How doth a worldly ſenſual temper grow and encreaſe

creaſe upon me, and the Divine Life within droop and languiſh.

The Prayer.

O Therefore my God give me grace to be frequent and fervent in Prayer, aſſiſt me by thy Spirit to dreſs and prepare my Soul for this more ſolemn approach to thee; and then I ſhall experience this to be the high way of Commerce with Heaven, I ſhall feel the wind blowing upon the Garden of my heart, and the Spices flowing forth; I ſhall feel the Spirit fanning that Spark of holy life it kindled into a flame; and I ſhall feel my ſelf tranſported and aſcending up above this vain world, and all the allurements of it: O therefore grant me, O my God, thy holy Spirit, that I may pray with underſtanding and fervency, with a prepar'd and a devout Soul; that my prayer may not be the ſacrifice of fools, and turn'd into ſin, but an acceptable Sacrifice to thee, an inſtrument of Holineſs, and a Guard againſt ſin, enabling me to fight the good fight of Faith, that I may receive an everlaſting Crown; and all for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt our Amen.

Chap.

CHAP. IV.

Of Faſting.

I Should now add ſomething concerning Faſting, which the Univerſal practice of the Church, beſides our Saviour's Rules preſcribed concerning it, do plainly ſuppoſe to be a Duty of Chriſtianity; but yet ſuch a one as is a Free-will offering, and ſo dependent of various circumſtances, that the Practice of it cannot be fixt by particular Rules; and therefore as I did on purpoſe omit ſpeaking to it, when I had a fair offer (under that Head, the means to obtain Temperance, conſider'd as a habit in the mind) ſo now I will only conſider it very briefly.

1. Whoever ſhall conſider the conſtant practice of the devouteſt men, the Nature of this Body we are cloathed with, or the frequent ſins to which the luſts of it have betrayed us, will diſcern Reaſon enough to invite him to this Duty, either in order to our Mortificati-

on,

on, and our future ſecurity, or as an act of affliction and Revenge for our paſt faults: Therefore,

2. Whoever totally neglects this Duty, upon pretence of the ill effects it hath upon eitheir Body or Mind, ought well to be aſſured, that the uneaſineſs of the one or other, be not the effect of a wanton and carnal Mind, rather than of the temper of the Body; and that his Body will admit of no degrees of this Duty, otherwiſe he is oblig'd according to his capacity.

3. To Faſting muſt be joyned Alms and Prayer, and vain glory muſt be ſeparated from it; without the former it is inſignificant, with the latter it is a ſin: But if any juſt Reaſons diſable any man to give alms, or to devote the day entirely to Spiritual Exerciſe, I cannot yet think but that Faſting may be us'd as an act of affliction, provided it be conſecrated to God by a holy intention at leaſt.

The

The Prayer.

GLorious God, I ſee in what a world I live, and what a Body this Soul of mine doth dwell in; how little kindles thoſe Luſts which blaſt the Innocence of my Soul, and deſtroy my peace; I remember how often I have behav'd my ſelf unbeſeeming a Child of God, only to gratifie the Inclinations of an ungovernable Body: Enable me therefore ſo to mortifie and ſubdue it, that I may enjoy an entire Peace and Conqueſt; ſo to humble and afflict it, that my revenge may teſtifie the ſorrow I feel for my miſdemeansour; and accept thou my ſorrow, to the atonement of my ſins, through the Bloud of Chriſt. Amen.

The Concluſion.

I Am now earneſtly to beſeech the Reader, to reflect ſeriouſly upon this whole Diſcourſe; and conſider, whether the Chriſtian Religion be not a Syſtem of moſt *glorious*, *delightful* and *important* Truths; whether any Princi-

Principles can raiſe Man to ſuch an entire *Conqueſt* o'er the wor'd and himſelf; whether Holineſs doth not tranſform him into a great and a glorious thing; whether any knowledge can create in him ſo perfect a *Peace*, and ſo undiſturb'd a *Joy*; whether there be any thing beſides Religion, can make a man ſpurn fawning *pleaſures*, and outbrave his *fears*; whether there be any thing which would turn the world into ſo much Paradice, and ſecure our *Peace* and *Intereſt* on ſuch unſhaken bottoms, and lead on the whole Train of a publick or private life in ſuch a ſafe and pleaſant method. What then? Art thou fond of Ruine? or hath damnation any charm in it? that thou wilt ſtill reſolve to perſevere in ſuch a manifeſt contradiction to the Laws of the bleſſed Jeſus? Wilt thou ſuffer thy Soul to be miſerable here through thoſe numerous luſts, which are the inceſſant torments of it? And canſt thou think of abandoning all the hopes of a glorious immortality?

Or doſt thou indeed look upon the Goſpel of Chriſt, as cunningly deviſed

Fables,

Fables, and readeſt theſe kind of Arguings, as only wiſe and politick harangues? Surely ſo much Holineſs confirm'd by ſo many Miracles, muſt needs witneſs its Divine Authority; and if thou wouldeſt but try thy ſelf the practice of it, thou wouldeſt feel its *divine* principle in the *Life* and the *Joys* of the Spirit!

But I am perſuaded, the greater part of mankind, cannot chuſe but in deſpight of Inclination, acknowledge the *truth* of the Goſpel, and the *Excellency* of Vertue; and confeſs that their Vices are the effect, not of their *choice*, but *weakneſs*: Bleſſed God! What account then will theſe men give of their Diſobedience, at that day when Chriſt ſhall come to render Vengeance to all, who have not obeyed his Goſpel, when they ſhall be put in mind of the prevalent motives made uſe of to endear Holineſs to them, and of the mighty Aſſiſtance of the Divine Spirit which was offer'd them towards enabling them to live well; when they ſhall ſee, (as a perfect Refutation of all ſuch excuſes) ſo many Millions (I hope) of bleſſed Saints,

Saints, who, though liable to the *ſame Paſſion*, and encompaſs'd by the *ſame Temptations*, did yet conquer all, and entred into Life through the *Straight Gate.*

But if this little Treatiſe ſhould light into the hands of a p[illegible] Atheiſt, or at leaſt of one who laug[illegible]t every particular Sect of Religion; to ſuch a one I addreſs theſe laſt lines, and I beſeech him to allow them ſo much conſideration as he would to any other thing which pretended to ſo much concernment and importance.

1. If there be a God, Nature ſeems to dictate, That he is a Rewarder of thoſe that ſeek him; and forgets not the Wiſe and Vertuous, neither in Life nor Death (and *Men*, as wiſe and rational Creatures, are his peculiar Offſpring, and more near related to him:) and on this Argument *Socrates* in his Apology founded his hopes of another life; an argument much a kin to that of our Saviour, *God is the God of* Abraham, *the God of* Iſaac, *the God of* Jacob, *now God is not the God of the Dead, but of the Living*; at the ſmartneſs and clear-

clearneſs of which arguing the people were aſtoniſh'd. And

If there be *another Life*, *Vertue* and *Goodneſs* muſt needs be the proper qualities to recommend and endear us to the God who preſides in that other World; (for I can never fancy a Brutiſh and irrational Diety.)

If there be no God (which is impoſſible) it is a thing impoſſible to be prov'd; and therefore an Atheiſt can never poſſeſs his Soul in any Reſt and Peace; and beſides, if there be none, the belief and practice of this Religion of Chriſtianity (as I'll make appear preſently) can do no man any harm? and what madneſs then is it, not to take the ſafeſt ſide in a matter of this dear concernment?

2. In behalf of Chriſtianity in particular, I beſeech ſuch a one to conſider,

That if thoſe Miracles and Proofs of Divine Authority, which the Goſpel relates, were true and real, then the matter is beyond diſpute.

If they were not, I would fain ſee ſome probable account, how Chriſtiani-

ty could ſo generally obtain, in deſpite of all the diſadvantages it was to encounter; having neither *Intereſt*, nor *Pleaſure*, nor *Force*, to countenance it againſt the eſtabliſh'd *Superſtitions* and *Vices* of the Age.

That it concern'd them of *Judæa*, which was the Scene of our Saviour's Actions, to have given the World a manifeſt account of the Impoſture, and ſo have provided for the ſecurity of Judaiſm, which was ſubverted by it.

That the wiſeſt and moſt Religious Sects amongſt both Jew and Gentile, where quickly ſwallowed up into Chriſtianity.

That thoſe early days were the moſt fit for a confutation of the Proofs on which Chriſtianity is bottom'd, as being moſt nearly conjoin'd to the times of our Saviour's and his Apoſtles actions; and therefore capable of being eaſily inform'd, and yet we find no ſuch thing done; which muſt needs ſuppoſe the World either monſtrouſly ignorant, or ſtupid, and ſenſeleſs, not only of their ſecular, but eternal intereſt: The former is utterly falſe, and the latter abſurd;

there-

therefore it is more than probable, no ſuch confutation could be form'd.

That the *Wiſdom* and *Majeſty*, the *Purity* and *Holineſs*, the *Myſteries* and *Prophecies* of it are ſo many tracks of Divine Glory, which beſpeak God its Author, it being very improbable, that e'er the Devil ſhould be ſo ſet againſt himſelf, as to promote that Holineſs, which is ſo contradictory to his nature; and though he ſhould have blended it with ſpeculative errours, that cannot be thought a miſchief able to ſatisfie him for all the good it hath done in the world; nor would ſuch a deſign ſavour enough of the malice of Hell, for ſurely God will never make a good man eternally miſerable, for a ſpeculative Errour into which his *Humility* and *Reſignation* to God, and ſuch ſtrong probabilities (not to ſay more) betrayed him.

But ſuppoſe (againſt all reaſon) that it were Fictitious, What can any man ſuffer by the belief of theſe Principles? certainly they tend to make us like God, and there is no article which reflects any diſparagement upon the Divine Nature,

but discovers it to the World, in the greatest and the loveliest Characters, and therefore unavoidably, if any Religion, then this, will secure our future Life.

As to the present, if our Life be clouded and o'ercast by afflictions, these Principles alone can support us under them, because these only are substantial grounds of courage or content: if our life be calm and fair, no mans injoys it with a more constant and untroubled satisfaction than the Religious, for Religion only crowns our outward prosperities with a firm peace and content within.

And yet all the clamour rais'd against Religion is this, that it enviously intrenches upon the pleasures of Nature, and wheedles us out of the possession of present pleasures, by the deceitful promises of future ——

In answer, I would fain know of any the most fortunate Epicure, (for I confess I have never been lucky enough to discover any such state) whether there be any enjoyment rich as *Fancy*, and ravishing as *Dotage*, if there be, of

of what *conſtancy* and *unmixt* purity it is; for if it be not fixt and ſteady, then a conſtant, cheerful life, as free from uneaſie fears, deſires and troubles, and repentances, as from the taſte of ſuch luſcious Meals, is ſurely to be preferr'd before a few fortunate Minutes, of a life in the general diſorder'd and troubled: or whether, accounts being ſtated rightly, we may not ſafely conclude, that there is no ſuch thing as ſuch an enjoyment, much leſs any permanent ſtate of it: and then,

I may eaſily defend Religion as to this point; for then it is but reaſonable that our deſires ſhould be calm and temperate, and that we ſhould ſit down content with ſuch eaſie and obvious pleaſures as ſuit this ſtate of imperfection and child-hood; and if ſo, What harm can Chriſtianity do Men? (as God expoſtulates with his People, *Teſtifie againſt me, wherein have I wronged thee?*) It doth not forbid us to *like*, but *dote*; it doth not forbid us to *enjoy* the World, but it forbids us to *equal* it with *Heaven.*

And when it hath once fixt the limits of worldly happineſs aright, it is ſo far from

from driving us out of the reach of it, that it is the only path to it; we ſail within thoſe Sea-marks, which if we ſlight we daſh on Rocks and Sands; for Anſwer me,

Are the *Faculties of our Soul* rendred more uncapable of Happineſs, becauſe cultivated and improv'd, employ'd to uſeful and ingenious purpoſes, not loſt on trifles? Are our *Sences* leſs ſubtile and judicious, becauſe the Body is preſerv'd in an entire and vigorous health by temperance and emlpoyment, and content of mind?

As to the *Objects* of our affections: Is a *Good Eſtate* leſs uſeful or leſs creditable by being ſpent temperately and Charitably? Is *Greatneſs* the leſs firm, or the leſs glorious, becauſe its Baſis is *Vertue*? Is a *Beauty* the leſs taking, becauſe Innocent and Vertuous? Of all the pleaſures of humane Life, I have always thought *Friendſhip* the deareſt, and certainly *ſenſe* as well as *wit*, true *courage*, and *honour* and *conſtancy*, (the product of Religion) as well as the *Accompliſhments* of Nature and genteel Education, muſt go to make

it

it perfect and delightful: when any are endeared by a *generous goodneſs*, by an *innocent* and *undeſigning* paſſion, by a combination of vertues, and a confederacy of rational delights and glorious hopes; I am confident no debauch'd mind can ever fancy anything ſo charming and romantick; and this Friendſhip can never be attained or preſerved unleſs it be founded in and cheriſhed by the great principles and vertues of religion; and if this be the caſe, if this be all that Religion doth; that is, if it be only a wiſe method to happineſs, ſet on foot by the *Goodneſs*, and contrived by the *Wiſdom* of God, I cannot diſcover any juſt ground of quarrel againſt it: I cannot ſee how the ſinner can get clear off from theſe Arguments; remember then 'tis a deſingenuous kind of confidence to return only raillery for anſwer to Arguments; and to think a loud laughter a ſufficient confutation of important truths. *Be not deceived, God will not be mocked*; a day is coming, when the ſecrets of all hearts ſhall be laid open, when God will argue his own cauſe in a flaming vengeance; and then what a miſerable

Tragedy

Tragedy will thy Mirth and Pleaſure, the Sinner and his World end in? What aſtoniſhment and dread will ſeize upon every Soul which hath hardned itſelf againſt the Goſpel of Chriſt? How miſerably fool'd and cheated will all the gay and jolly Sinners find themſelves? But glory, honour and peace will be the portion of every one, who worketh righteouſneſs.

The Prayer.

O *Thou holy Spirit of God, thou divine principle of a divine life, remove all blindneſs, hardneſs and impenitence from off the hearts of all thoſe who read the truths of the Goſpel of Chriſt, and grant that they may receive the word of Chriſt with an entire Humility and pure affections, and bring forth the fruit of it in their Converſation; that when the winds blow, and the rain deſcends, and the floods beat, they may be like houſes built upon a rock, and ſtand unſhaken in the great day of Judgment.* Amen, Amen.

FINIS.